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JUNE 1919.

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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

NEW YORK:

THE LEONARD SCOTT PUBLICATION CO.,

HARR PERREE, PROP.

249 WEST 13TH STREET.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH.

Entered at the New York Post-Office as second-class matter.

Entered as second-class matter, July 3, 1917, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879

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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCXLIV. JUNE 1919. Vol. CCV.

"GARRISON" WORK IN ARCTIC RUSSIA.

BY ROBUR.

THE adventures (and misadventures) of a "B" battalion, "fit for a winter on the Murman Coast," would not appear to deserve much notice, and if that battalion had remained to garrison the port to which it was conveyed, the memories of its tour in Northern Russia might have been left to a merciful oblivion. But its work was scarcely that of a garrison. We arrived at a port in the Kola river in accordance with our expectations, but the transport was ordered to proceed forthwith to another destination, and bore us eastwards to the White Sea, where we were gladly taken by the powers that be and transformed into a "striking force," a *rôle* which we sustained, not entirely without success, for many weary months.

Russia is a *mañana* country, only more so, for if a Russian says *zavtra* he may do the job some time or other, but if he says *posle-zavtra* (the day after to-morrow) it must be taken to mean "never." This we found on the August day when attempts were made to induce the captains of the various tugs to start pulling our barges up-stream to the scene of our future adventures, and from that date we were forced to accumulate the store of patience which enables one to deal with natives without disaster.

The voyage itself was peaceful and dull, but every day we landed on Russian soil, exchanged cigarettes for cakes of sour rye or tree partridges, and kicked a football about, to the amusement of the women and children toiling in the hay-fields. Occasionally the men would rouse themselves from their lethargy and stroll down to the shore to coax tobacco or cigarettes from

the good-natured Tommies (for although we were supposed to be Jocks, we most of us hailed from the wrong side of the Tweed). We were five days reaching the advanced base, and on the third morning we passed a river gunboat, with its flag at half-mast, carrying casualties down the river. We learnt afterwards that an unlucky shot from a Bolshevik 3-inch gun had killed a midshipman and some A.B.'s on the Allies' flagship. (On its way a splinter from the shell had removed the surgeon's left eye, therefore he went aft to the scene of the main explosion and minded those who were in need, going below only when ordered to do so by the captain.) Some one signalled "Hurry up, you're wanted," so we put another log or two on the furnace to increase our knotage and disembarked at the advanced base, to find that the first change in the kaleidoscopic campaign had already taken place.

What we expected was an order to proceed another hundred miles or so to the headquarters of the column and the scene of operations; but H.Q. and the scene had come to meet us. The names and numbers of the various squadrons, batteries, and companies which composed the force we had set out to join may not be revealed, but they must have amounted (if the R.M.L.I. contingent be included in the land column) to one-tenth or one-twelfth of the organised portion of the enemy's forces. This column had chased the Bolsheviks to a bend in the river and had captured several pom-poms and other dangerous instruments of war, in raids on both banks wherever opposition was met. But North Russia is a vast country, and there are dense forests on either bank of its rivers and scores of villages. The opposition had melted away, but the advance had been so swift that the column had left some hundreds of the enemy in its rear, and when it landed for a breathing space the disintegrated atoms again formed masses round the abandoned guns, which the silence of fear had concealed from the advancing column. Expecting our arrival and a further flow of reinforcements, the column commander had decided *reculer pour mieux sauter*, and had run the gauntlet without receiving so much as a scratch on his paddle-boxes, between the cross-fire of guns of almost every calibre.

As soon as we had stretched our legs and exercised all ranks in the use of the Russian rifle and M.G.'s, we began to take a hand in the campaign. "B" Company was sent to garrison an outlying village commanding the ferry over a tributary stream; "C" Company made a demonstration among the villages on the banks of the tributary for a distance of about 350 *versts* (200 miles or so is nothing in Russia); and "A" Company was sent to the right bank, to billet itself in the village opposite the advanced base.

The word "village" requires

to be defined, or the newcomer will fall into the trap which so often marred our best-laid schemes. Let it be supposed that an officer is sent away to report at Popoffskaia. He will be shown the place on a map, and may be taken to high ground whence he may view the village through his glasses. He then proceeds on his way, having learnt that Popoffskaia is 12 *versts* from his starting-point. After about 8 *versts* he will pass through a cluster of peasants' houses, then into the open again, and after an interval through another cluster. He will ask his way, and his informant will point ahead. This will be repeated at intervals, until at length the informant will point behind instead of ahead of the inquirer, who will again consult his map. Every one of his informants will have heard of Popoffskaia and will have a general idea of its location, which will have been indicated. The officer will retrace his steps, and on arriving at the first cluster of houses will ask the name of the village, and will be told "Romanoffski." He will proceed farther on his back track, and will be told "Timofeefski." He will again ask for Popoffskaia, and will be shown the way by one informant forwards and another backwards. The fact is that Popoffskaia is a geographical term for about six hamlets, each of which has a geographical name, a real name, and a sort of pet name, and these hamlets are collectively shown on the map as Popoffskaia. Nor is this the only trap for the unwary, as the people who correspond to the "Trustees for the Navigation of the Clyde" have another set of names, which they inscribe on the *preestan* (landing-stage) at riverside halting-places, and such names, although writ large on maps, may stand for nothing but the *preestan* itself —or worse still, may be called after a village near which it was formerly anchored, but the river having shifted its course, the landing-stage (with its name) may have been towed a long way from its original position, possibly to the opposite bank of the mile-wide river! But the maps will still mark its new site by the old name, in letters the same size as before, and will add the conventional sign for a church if the eponymous village contained such an edifice. We found it safer to discard all printed maps, and we charted our course as we went, placing the geographical name round the clusters of locally named villages.

For the first week of September our fortunes were divided by the river. "B" Company soon got to work, and in conjunction with the Senior Service made good its footing on both banks of the tributary, and when joined by Transatlantic and other allies carried out a campaign in a large triangle between the main river and the tributary. One of their marches of 24 *versts* cost them ten hours of weary toil, the force moving in single file across a trackless

swamp on trees felled *ad hoc* and laid end to end in the *tundra*. If a man slipped off the log he disappeared to his waist, and was only saved by a comrade climbing a neighbouring tree and bending a bough down to his reach—a trick we ever afterwards remembered and employed with success. This march was made over an "impassable" obstacle by design, and brought the force where it was least expected, in rear of the enemy's position. Unfortunately, however, dissensions among the Bolsheviks had led them to retire before the move was completed, and "B" Company struck the rearguard only, captured the commander's motor-car and two 18-pdrs., and accounted for the laggards; but the triangle was cleared of the enemy, the land guns were withdrawn from their secret emplacements in the forest, and impediments to the progress of the Allies' flotilla were thus removed. "B" Company's commander received another bar to his M.C., and a zealous platoon commander was awarded the purple and white ribbon.

An untoward incident marred the conclusion of the engagement. The company arrived at a village on the main stream and sat down to await the arrival of the ration boat. In the early morning the beat of paddles and smoke from the funnel of an approaching steamer caused the despatch of a ration party, who were proceeding to the landing-stage when a horde of Bolsheviks surrounded them and made them prisoners. The boat was an armed steamer from the hostile flotilla, and had strayed down the river in ignorance of the withdrawal of the land forces. As soon as the sentry saw what had happened he fired at the captors and was wounded by the return fire; but the alarm was taken up, and armed parties with machine-guns started off in rowing boats, ahead and astern of the steamer, to cut her out. Panic and confusion among the crew led them to a dastardly act, for they murdered the ration party in cold blood before getting aboard to man their 3-in. guns. An interesting struggle might have taken place between sailors on a ship with 18-pdr. field-guns and soldiers in boats with Vickers-Maxims at point-blank range; but before issue was joined the rowing boats suddenly made for the land, while the steamer ran her nose into the nearest island and the crew jumped ashore. The *deus ex machina* was H.M.S. ——, with silent oil-engines and a noisy 7-in. gun. Her first shot fell in the water and scattered the combatants, while the second struck the paddle-box of the stranded steamer, which sunk with her back broken into the river mud. "B" Company rounded up the crew on the island, and the miscreant who ordered the ration party to be massacred did not escape from justice.

Meanwhile "A" Company had been active on the opposite bank. Slowly feeling its

way in a new country and under novel conditions of warfare, it advanced from village to village, the Bolshevik rearguards falling back as it came, until at length serious opposition was met. "C" Company was sent over to assist, the flotilla acting as chaperon and lending the countenance of its long-range ordnance, but after the hostile batteries had been located and saluted by the secondary armament of H.M.S. ——, the enemy eluded us once again and were reported to be strongly entrenched about 20 *versts* away. The fruits of the victory were one 18-pdr. and a genuine distaste for the type of road, often knee-deep in mud, through which we had dragged our weary way.

Roads in this part of northern Russia are of two kinds only. Those marked "first-class" contain stretches, often a hundred yards or so long, which are good and passable even in the height of summer, and "second-class" roads have fewer and shorter intervals between the quagmires. No other kinds exist in the summer months, but when the snow falls (October to May) good roads can be made in any direction. For this reason the summer roads are generally neglected and used as little as possible, traffic being carried on by water while the river is open. Unfortunately for the right bank column, it was destined to move where a "second-class" road existed in parts and none at all in others; while the column on the left bank often had its advance held up by the state of the boldly marked "first-class" road which led them to their goal. In addition to these obstacles there are, in summer, the even less passable "streets" of the villages *en route*. These are, at their best, rather deeper in mire than a really unpopular section of trench in the low-lying part of the Somme front, and at their worst they form a powerful drag on the wheels of an advance.

"A" Company was commanded during the early days of the campaign by a "mud major" (afterwards a column commander), who was most anxious to entrap the elusive foe, and after the baffling retreats of the first week or so he decided to cut inland and to reappear on the river bank, while "C" Company and the others advanced with pomp and ceremony to an attack which must of necessity bring about a result. His march was to be guided by a woodcutter, and the 35 *versts* were to be covered in eighteen hours, by which time the attack of the rest of the column was to be launched, and his encircling force would strike where it was least expected. He started at 10 A.M., and soon discovered that the "path" was a winter and not a summer route. Trees had to be felled and laid across the swamp, and there were few who were not at least waist-deep in slime. Yet he managed to get all his men, with their Lewis guns and magazines, over the weary way, wet to the bone, their faces, necks, and wrists inflamed from the incessant stings of the venomous

black fly of the *tundra* region. About 2 *versts* from his goal the "path" improved, and his scouts were met by three peasant women, who fled incontinently at the sight of his khaki-clad troops, an untoward incident which was immediately reported. Surprise was clearly impossible under these conditions, for the women were legging it with incredible speed, the exhausted troops could not overtake them, and men of British race do not shoot women. The Major therefore called a halt in the forest, and guided by his compass he struck out anew, across the trackless *tundra*, to circumvent the village in rear of his former objective. His tired troops were carried on merely by the strength of his will, and despite 12 *versts* of *tundra* and the flies and the fatigue, he reached his final goal. *O fallacem hominum spem!* The three women had so perturbed the Bolshevik army that it was in headlong flight, and soon after his arrival the Major learnt that the next stand was to be made over 20 miles from his new position. But 45 *versts* over the trackless *tundra*, from 10 A.M. one day to 4 A.M. the next, without the loss of a cartridge, was a fine feat for any troops; and although no casualties were inflicted on the enemy, it was seen later by the troops which followed how many lives had been saved by the movement of this encircling company.

This flank march had brought "A" Company ahead of the column on the opposite bank, and "B" Company were sent over to join "A" and "C," while Transatlantic troops took over the campaign on the other side, the two forces being ordered to move *pari passu* under the protective tutelage of the flotilla. But this was not to be. During the retreat from "A" Company, the Bolsheviks had removed their land guns to rafts and barges, and had thus spirited them away; but between their flotilla and our own they had laid row after row of river mines, and these put the Allies' fleet out of action, limiting its influence to the extreme range of its heaviest guns. On our bank the enemy were well beyond this range, and on the other they began to obstruct our Transatlantic and other allies from a distance which placed a margin of safety between them and the fleet, reinforcing their land troops with men and guns from our bank. The advance thus became dog-legged, with our column well forward, trying to get our land guns alongside or behind their flotilla, and the Transatlantic column pushing their land forces back 10 or 15 *versts* at a time on the opposite bank, inflicting casualties when stoutly opposed, but never succeeding in getting round before they bolted.

The month passed away with this sort of action every day, and as we marched through the abandoned positions we recognised our debt to "A" Company for having induced the enemy to evacu-

ate such strongholds. One, in particular, 10 *versts* on the enemy's side of the spot where the company had finally debouched, was not only strong by nature of the ground and its approaches, but had been strengthened by most cunningly-devised trenches, quite of the Hun pattern, and at right angles to the real trench line,—an artificial belt of fir-trees, bodily transplanted from the forest, masked the defensive plan. When we heard in the following month that the Major had received the D.S.O. for this and other excellent work during the advance, those of us who had viewed the positions we had not been compelled to assault knew how well it had been won.

"B" Company took over the advanced-guard work from "A," and had a most tantalising experience during the next few days. They pushed on, always on the *qui vive* (for the Bolshevik is cunning as well as cruel), and entered a dense forest belt, to arrive at a small settlement on the banks of a steep-sided ravine, through which a tributary stream wound its way to the river. They "captured" the village at nightfall, and learnt from the *Starosta* (headman) that the Bolsheviks had fled through the forest two days earlier, and were no longer in the neighbourhood. The company cast out sentries and prayed for the dawn, to find themselves cut off from the main river by an uncharted bayou, into which (instead of into the main stream) the little river poured its tribute. This bayou, and the wide sandspit which half encircled it, added another 2000 yards to the distance separating us from our Transatlantic friends, who were plodding through the mire on the opposite bank of the river, and "B" Company, with rifles, hand grenades, and Lewis guns were well in rear of the enemy's ships and infantry, but out of range of both, and our guns had been outstripped by seventy-two hours. Runner after runner was sent back to urge the guns forward, but a runner on a native pony cannot do more than 3 *versts* an hour on a forest track in September, and although he may perhaps go faster he cannot go farther on foot, and the guns were more than 60 *versts* away. At length the guns arrived, aided by two rainless nights, which left our track a wee bit harder than we had found it; but in the forty-eight hours between our arrival and the advent of the guns the battle on the left bank had been decided, "Old Glory" fluttered amongst the fir-trees, and the hostile fleet had departed, leaving little or nothing behind. But for that "second-class" road we might have won the war there and then. Think of it, ye gunners! Twenty-five unarmoured ships, some of them encumbered with rafts carrying 6-inch guns, within 4000 yards of your 18-pdrs. The first rounds would indeed have been bolts from the blue, and they would have locked the door through which the Bolsheviks escaped.

Our two columns got into step after this experience, but we were forced to leave the Senior Service behind, as mine-sweeping had proved to be far more difficult than had been expected, and when at length the river was free again there was no sign of the hostile fleet, and the land forces had melted away before the fire of our victorious troops. "Old Glory" flew from a flag-pole in the village from which headquarters had withdrawn after the earlier dash up-stream, but the "aged pioneer placing a knife-rest in position" (as a Sassenach irreverently described our cap badge of St Andrew holding his cross) got "farthest south," for "A" Company who had resumed advanced-guard work sent a patrol to examine the fortifications of a riverside stronghold covering the Bolshevik naval arsenal and refitting station. The officer in charge actually entered the Bolshevik lines, and in the dusk their guard "stood to" to do him honour. There were no supports at hand at the moment, and useless encounters with the enemy are avoided by well-trained troops; therefore the officer withdrew under cover of the Lewis gun carried by his small patrol, but no violence was offered, and his party retired with a very good idea of the best line of attack, and with other information of considerable value to the column commander.

The month of September had wrought a great change in the positions of the opposing forces, but although we were clearly top dog and had imposed our will upon the enemy, we were still many weary miles from our objective, and his main army was still in the field, while the water was falling several inches every day and no one could predict how long the river would remain unfrozen. It was thus without surprise that we learnt from headquarters of considerable changes in the plan of campaign, and under the new scheme the Bolshevik was to be left unharried by land and river, our advanced troops were to be withdrawn, and our column was to establish itself astride the river in defensive positions from which it could emerge for a renewal of the campaign in the spring. "B" and "C" Companies were withdrawn to a *7-verst* village on a riverside plain, in rear of which a boldly marked ridge was to become their "Torres Vedras," while "A" Company was sent across to the opposite bank, to establish its lines in the outskirts of a collection of hamlets, with a field of fire of some 1800 yards before the forest swept round again to the river-bank. A Transatlantic company remained to cover the working parties on this left bank, and the flotilla lay with its guns pointing up-stream, to intimidate the foe should he regain coherence and summon up courage to attack us.

But there were no signs of war in the land. Their troops were reported to be dispirited and scattered into groups,

each with a separate plan of campaign, while their flotilla, recognising its inferiority to our own, had returned to its permanent base, to lie up for the winter.

A few days' rest was a welcome change to our three companies. Since the beginning of the month they had been afoot, and, owing to the roads and to "battle order" in which they were equipped, not an officer or man had been able to change his wet socks or boots, or to dry those he was wearing. This constant wet and the coldness it engendered, together with the unchanging diet of bully and biscuit, had brought us all down with diarrhœa, which was so general that it could not be accepted as a reason for "going sick," or we should all have been in hospital. There is an ethnological note in the library edition of 'The Thousand Nights and a Night,' to the effect that only the costive are courageous; but although our bodies were infirm we were fairly stout-hearted still, and in the next few months we were able "to thank whatever gods may be for our unconquerable soul." Access to kit-bags and valises, and regular turns in the bath-houses, soon paved the way for a recovery, and in a few days we scarcely knew ourselves or one another. In fairly good fettle we laid out our defences, and when everything was in a fair way towards the chrysalis stage, H.Q. withdrew to the advanced base, *en route* for another of its fronts, leaving the plans to emerge as blockhouses and wire fences on the sites where the paper schemes had placed them. Two days later the Transatlantic company was withdrawn from its covering position, 14 *versts* ahead of "A" Company, and left our front for other fields of glory.

The Senior Service had been bored stiff for at least a fortnight. There was nothing to shoot at except wild duck, and the falling river and the prospect of ice were threatening their keels. It must have been a relief to their minds when they received orders, on October 3, to proceed forthwith to the naval base until the reopening of the river should afford them further opportunities of showing the flag. We bade them a reluctant farewell, and settled down, feeling a wee bit lonely, to prepare the position for defence and the houses for a winter habitation.

. . . . . .

On the morning of October 4 we were a little later than usual for breakfast, the troops being given an extra hour in bed as a reward for the hardships they had endured; but something seemed to be amiss, in spite of the friendly beams of the sun and the keen October air. On all sides the peasants seemed to have a different demeanour, and their confidence in us and in our cause seemed to have waned. Rumours of all kinds also reached our ears, and there

were gatherings in the streets, and later in the day an unusual activity among the householders and a great packing and removal of goods. About lunch-time, the Senior Service being then some twenty-four hours away, a loud booming heralded the bombardment of the forward village, which had been evacuated by our Transatlantic Allies.

Amongst our defensive and offensive arms at that time was a squadron of aeroplanes, well manned, but equipped only with what the Bolsheviks had left undamaged; and although nominally a bombing squadron, there was not a bomb rack among them all, the projectiles being nursed in the lap and dropped by hand by the solitary aviator. The squadron received orders to investigate this matter of the booming and to mitigate the nuisance forthwith, but before the air report was received the nuisance had manifested itself and had developed into a scientific bombardment of both sides of our position from a range which precluded a reply to their incivilities. A temporary respite was obtained while the squadron was in the air, but the bombs could not be accurately aimed, and no loses were inflicted on the ships. The report was far from reassuring. Twenty-eight river craft were counted, including a new type of ship altogether—a sort of Danube monitor, with a vicious-looking gun of a calibre estimated at 11 inches (it was actually 9·2), while all the ships appeared to have discarded their previous armament of Austrian field-guns in improvised emplacements for naval guns on naval mountings. In addition, there was great activity on land in the neighbourhood of the village at the bend of the river, 14 *versts* from "A" Company's lines and about 9 from the most forward of the villages occupied by "B" and "C" Companies on the other bank, and large bodies of troops were being landed there and heavy guns were being hauled ashore.

On the left bank the exiguous garrison provided by one battle-scarred company could not indulge in operations very far afield, but the lines were advanced and all approaches carefully watched, until our patrols were driven in and the enemy established himself in a forest village 6 *versts* from the outposts.

On the right bank the two companies, with allied detachments in small numbers, were better able to make demonstrations, and they spread nets in which hostile patrols became most successfully enmeshed. Most of our information was derived from these captives by "B" and "C" Companies, and although it was full of interest it was sadly devoid of comfort to our column. For it transpired that, directly the last of our ships had steamed away, a peasant had rowed a load of hay across the river, from the right bank to a point above the village from which "Old Glory" had so recently de-

parted. Now, the land telegraph ran on the left bank, and it had been cut about 2 *versts* out of the village, where the road re-entered the forest. To this spot the peasant, who was none other than the Bolshevik chief staff-officer, directed his steps. As a result of his conversation with his commander the Bolshevik fleet reappeared from its base, where it had been refitting and by no means lying up for the winter, while the reorganised army, which had spread abroad the most unfavourable reports concerning its numbers and intentions, followed up in well-appointed troopships. We had fallen into a nicely-baited trap, and were face to face with more powerful guns and better troops than any of us had previously encountered in this campaign.

Certain essential steps were taken as soon as the nature of the operations was revealed. We mobilised our fleet, which consisted of "Tug, screw, one," and hauled our precious ration barge down-stream, where it lay out of range of the largest gun, and then in the dusk prepared to tow our raft gun, with its ammunition float, to a less conspicuous place. Misadventures crowded upon us from that evening. Our "fleet," fed with logs like all such river craft, sparked most viciously and drew a salvo from the enemy's guns, whereupon the native crew pointed the tug's nose into the bank and leaped ashore, leaving the fires undrawn and full steam pressure in the boiler. But no shots had hit the tug, and although the ammunition float was holed and sinking and the raft gun had been put out of action by a shell, its gallant crew cast the raft adrift and poled it away in the dusk, returning later to salve the ammunition from the sunken float.

With scarcely any intermission by night or day a liberal supply of shells was distributed by the enemy, and while "A" Company had perforce to be content to take such steps as were possible to avoid casualties, "B" and "C" Companies were able to invent means to inflict them. The rules of the game as played on the right bank were very flexible, and the Bolsheviks never quite grasped them. The companies would permit their forward platoon to retire, in apparent confusion, from a shell-scarred hamlet during a prolonged bombardment, and the "Bolo" would be permitted to enter the "deserted" village, when suddenly an attack would be made from the rear by the former garrison, and vicious spurts of M.G. fire from the "deserted" village would complete the enemy's discomfiture. This game was played with variations to suit particular occasions, and if the shells had made our heads "bloody," they were still "unbowed"; but the playing-fields on which it was practised became daily more restricted. "Frame houses," as they are called on the other side of the Atlantic, were not designed to withstand H.E.

shells from nine- and six-inch guns, and once the flames from an explosion have really caught hold of a log-built house there is little to do except confine the fire, if one can, to the scene of the explosion. One hamlet after another was destroyed by fire, until the companies were driven back to the remaining villages on the cliff, confining their offensive action to battle-patrol work and judicious counter-attacks when opportunity offered.

On the left bank the brushes with the enemy had been less exciting, but casualties had been inflicted during the seven days from the 4th to 10th, and during the early hours of the 11th the welcome news of approaching reinforcements enabled "A" Company to contemplate a share in a nicely-planned battle, during which they were to simulate an attack upon the investing force, while the reinforcements marched up in rear of the Bolsheviks and enabled "A" Company to join in a real assault. The simulated attack was opened at dawn, and rifles and machine-guns occupied the enemy throughout their lines. They assumed, as we desired, that we were paving the way for a sortie, and they threw in supports at points which appeared to be threatened. The signal of participation by our own reinforcements was eagerly awaited, and messengers dashed through the investing lines to get into touch with the new arrivals, but a stroke of bad luck had again befallen us. The vast fires on the opposite bank had been seen during the night by the crew of the tug which was hauling our supporting troops up the river, and the officer in command was told that the village to which he was directed was in flames, and must already have been abandoned. From the angle at which it was then seen, the fire certainly appeared to be on the left bank, and the reinforcements were landed there, and then to march, as good soldiers should, to the sound of the cannon, about 20 *versts* away along a "first-class" road in the worst possible condition. By the time the rattle of musketry was within earshot, an officer who had been sent to meet the reinforcements was able to lead our Transatlantic Allies (for such they proved to be) along the route which passed to the rear of the investing foe, and into the Bolsheviks they burst, while "A" Company participated at length in the struggle which entirely routed the enemy, and left in our hands two pom-poms (which had irritated us exceedingly) and several machine-guns and other trophies, with very little cost to ourselves and with heavy losses to the Bolsheviks. But the combined attack had taken place at dusk instead of dawn, and the pursuit through the forest was held up by the darkness as much as by the fatigue of our Allies, who had marched and fought, unfed, for more than twelve hours.

"If my aunt had been born a boy she would have been my

uncle;" that we understood, but if the tug's crew had not misled our Allies, they would have landed on the pre-arranged spot, and would have attacked quite as much from the blue, and the pursuit could have been followed up to the village, 6 *versts* away, while surprise was still a terror to the foe. As matters turned out, the espionage system, at its height against us at that time, revealed to the enemy during the night the small number of our reinforcements, and when the battle was resumed at dawn the next day, it was (forgive the meiosis) not very favourable to our arms. Hostile reinforcements of men and guns were poured into and around the forest village, our objective at the time, and our troops were compelled to fight their way back to the shelter of block-houses and wire in "A" Company's position, the enemy recovering their lost ground and resuming the close investment.

On the right bank a similar mischance had befallen an over-bold platoon which had pursued a local counter-attack to greater length than prudence would dictate, and had been extricated, not without losses, by other platoons of the same company. The final result of the engagements was not in our favour, and the enemy's tail had gone up so far that he had discovered the weakness of our right-bank position, where it rested on a 12-mile forest, into which there ran an encircling road from Bolshevik territory. Nor did this complete our debit balance, for a secret reinforcement in the shape of a naval gun, which had arrived on the night of the 11th and had been in action for forty-eight hours, had failed to yield the results we anticipated, while the aeroplanes were still without victims, and the hostile fleet was bringing into use thirty-eight guns of various calibres, salvoes from which were reaching their targets with increasing accuracy.

We had a sort of stocktaking on the night of the 13th, and the result kept the land wires very busy for some hours until a decision was arrived at, and after dark on the 14th the wounded from the right bank were conveyed through the 12-mile forest, while those from the left bank were taken through the investing lines (one shot sufficing to protect them) to the hospital ship, which then proceeded down-stream to pick up the right-bank convoy. As soon as the wounded were away we made our own preparations and destructions, some particularly evil booby-traps being provided to delay the enemy, while our forces on both banks made their way to another position about 14 miles down-stream. And as we went through the night, and for twelve hours afterwards, we heard their guns pounding our empty billets. The second phase of this campaign had not ended very brilliantly for us, but in France our troops were working miracles, and we had just heard that the Hun was asking for an armistice. If we

had reverberated throughout the world," whose marksmanship had taken so deadly a toll of Howe's army. Alongside was a section of artillery manned by countrymen of those sharpshooters whose marksmanship at Chateauguay had prevented the Stars and Stripes from entering the land of the maple leaf. And these forces were strengthened by men of a race which had earned at Coruña the verdict of Napier that "the British fire is the most deadly ever known." Whatever feuds had once divided these races had long ago been buried, and their friendship was cemented afresh on this bloody field. Yet the silence of the enemy near those guns when called upon to surrender has provoked a dispute between the battery drivers armed with rifles, the gunners on the left bank with their "muzzle-bursts," the gunners on the right bank with their covering fire, and the two platoons of "A" Company, who had come up in support, as to the principal cause of that silence. But somebody, somehow or other, had put it beyond the power of the enemy to deliver a reply. Not a man was alive in their lines, and the only survivors of the "decisive" attack were a few wounded prisoners, who had fallen near the field hospital, into which the orderlies had immediately carried them, and a handful of others lying near the hospital, still alive and unwounded, but dead drunk. The normal Bolo is as bad as the Hun, and this "International" battalion consisted mainly of very bad Huns. It is difficult, therefore, to praise the staff of that hospital too highly. In the first place, they attended immediately to the wounded (who happened to be Bolsheviks), and in the second, they went about their work throughout the day as if nothing unusual had taken place in the vicinity, although the hospital had ceased to be within our lines. It is pleasant to be able to record that nothing untoward happened, except the theft of certain medical comforts, and the credit for this must be assigned partly to a woman in hostile uniform, one of the Bolshevik Women's Legion, who prevented excesses of any worse nature than the theft of stores. This woman, the "buckshee" wife of a deceased Bolo leader (who had left a real widow behind the lines), received much honour from us while a prisoner of war, and had indeed given rein to her natural impulses.

During the night of the 11th a heavy fall of snow was followed by a sudden drop in the temperature, and ice again appeared on the river banks. The frost drove away the fleet for the winter, and so proved beneficial to our forces; but the snow left the corpses of the fallen enemy in a natural grave and deprived the disputants in the "shrapnel *versus* bullet" controversy of the only means of proving or losing their case. The morning of the 12th was spent in bringing in the spoil, and a patrol sent into the forest col-

lected much useful material from still uncovered dumps, as well as the sledges on which the material had been transported. But the horses and their drivers had succumbed to the exposure, and lay dead in the snow on the forest track.

The second half of November was a period of rest punctuated by fierce raids into our advanced posts, particularly into those on the right bank, and we suffered some casualties in this way, all of which were repaid with such high interest that the Bolsheviks must have mistrusted the value of their security. During this period the river was in process of becoming passable. Perhaps all rivers in similar basins and in corresponding latitudes freeze in the same way. First a ledge of ice adheres to each bank of the main river and of its affluents, then the weight of the fallen snow detaches parts of these ledges in the tributaries, and in a minor degree in the main stream, and the current is smothered with drift ice while the ledges extend, as the temperature drops, farther and farther towards the centre of the river. The time comes when the fragments floating in the centre adhere to one another in a solid mass, and after much creaking and squeezing join forces with the ledges from the banks, while the waters of the river flow unimpeded beneath the icy coverlet. In our case there was an interval of nearly four weeks between the suspension of navigation and the opening of traffic across the ice, and during the interval our forces, like those of the enemy, were cut in two. But this was more serious for us than for the enemy, as the Advanced Base was cut off from the forces on the right bank by the main river, and from those on the left by the wide mouth of the tributary, and only the lamps of the signal service united us.

The first passenger was an adventurous peasant who crossed on November 28, and after that date the increasing cold stabilised the covering, and sleigh routes were quickly opened where most needed. The greatest cold we experienced in the month was on the 27th, when there were 59 degrees of frost (Fahrenheit).

The reopening of communication between the Advanced Base and the two wings of the River Column was of inestimable service to our battalion, for during the last few days of free navigation our fourth company had arrived from another front, and other reinforcements being also available, two of our three battle-scarred companies were at length withdrawn into rest billets behind the line. Our own "D" Company relieved "B," and reinforcements from an English city battalion relieved "C," who returned for rest and refitting to that very village opposite the Advanced Base from which they had set out to join "A" Company in the first week of September, while "B" Company rested under similar conditions at a half-way house on the L. of C.

December was a fairly placid month from the point of view of operations, and in very sooth it was too cold to fight in the open. One of our patrols actually encountered a hostile force of approximately equal strength in No-man's-land, each arriving on the opposite brink of a steep ravine which prevented the use of the bayonet. Both patrols endeavoured to fire their rifles with their gloves on their hands, but found it impossible of achievement, and metal chilled by 60 degrees of frost cannot be touched with the naked hand without disaster. They parted after an exchange of nothing more deadly than grimaces.

The forces on both sides of the river carried on active reconnaissance, and strengthened their positions with a cunning based on experience in other theatres of war, and a period of stagnation set in. Our own battalion enjoyed a Christmas dinner embellished by purchases from a special grant, and did not omit to send a seasonable message of respect and good wishes to the Colonel-in-Chief, to which Her Royal Highness returned a most gracious and warm-hearted reply.

Hogmanay was celebrated with becoming reticence and a rum ration, and in the first week of the New Year the relief of "A" Company completed the cycle. For more than eighteen weeks the company had been engaged in active pursuit of the enemy or in the front defensive line, and it emerged victorious on its return to Battalion Headquarters opposite the Advanced Base. A curious link between their first stay and their return was discovered a day or two after their arrival. After much adjustment a rate of payment for the occupation of billets had been promulgated and the first settlement was made in December. Some surprise was caused when the *Starosta* presented the bill, for he charged us for the occupation of certain billets in the most forward hamlet from 15th August. Nor would he strike out this claim, for he maintained that as the payments were admitted to be retrospective, he was entitled to the money from the date of the commencement of his services as Town Major. It was clearly a mistake, as we had not occupied the village until September 3rd, and the amount was struck out. It subsequently transpired that the *Starosta* had in fact provided billets from August 15th to September 3rd, and then for the first time "A" Company realised that on the last-named date they had slept peacefully in their beds, while the forward village, 3 *versts* beyond their sentry groups, harboured at least twice their number of Bolsheviks. The *Starosta*, with an impartiality that proved his fitness for civic office, had provided accommodation for friend and foe alike, and had informed neither of the other's presence. No doubt he hoped for the best, and luck was with him, the Bolsheviks leaving in a

hurry on hearing of our approach.

After refitting and reorganising the company settled down to training in various accomplishments in which circumstances demanded that they should be proficient, including progress in snow-shoes, which presented little difficulty, and the speedier and more exhilarating use of skis, the short-legged among them finding the accepted method of turning a most rupturesome proceeding. Mingled with their other duties was that of providing an escort to officers of the military control service in their domiciliary visits and arrests.

Before the month of January had run its course, a dramatic change in the tactical situation on another front drew "A" Company back to the firing line. It may be remembered that headquarters had withdrawn from the main river in the last week of September, and from that time it had established itself in the midst of another column which was operating some miles up the tributary stream, where a town of some local importance offered the requisite accommodation. This town had been for some time the loadstone of Bolshevik aspirations, and they had contrived to drag heavy siege-guns over the winter roads. These weighty arguments, and reinforcements in such numbers as threatened the isolation of the town, led eventually to its abandonment, and to the establishing of an interior line of defence within closer reach of the Advanced Base. While this line was in process of building, two platoons of "A" Company were called in to assist, and one of them had an exciting time for four days, with 6-inch shells for breakfast, lunch, tea, and dinner; but the experiences of the past had hardened them, and they suffered little from these blandishments. During their absence the remaining platoons had flitted to repel a threatened raid on the L. of C., travelling 85 *versts* in twenty-six hours, with all ranks alternately riding in sleighs and marching on foot, to prevent frost-bite and to provide precautions against surprise. Although the situation on the tributary permitted the speedy return of the first platoons, the company was not again united for several days.

Candlemas Day (15th February, old style) marks the turning-point of the North Russian winter. After that date the sun gains strength, the lengthening of the days is more pronounced, and the temperature suffers fewer variations, remaining in the neighbourhood of 25 or 30 degrees below zero (Fahrenheit).

We await the spring, when it comes, with confidence, and expect to be able to give a good account of ourselves.

450 MILES TO FREEDOM.

BY CAPTAIN M. A. B. JOHNSTON and CAPTAIN K. D. YEARSLEY.

CHAPTER XIV.

Our experiments at chupattie-making had led us in the end to grind the wheat in two stages—first into coarse meal, and then, with a finer setting of the mill, into flour. This meant less strain both for us and for the machine: upon the safety of the latter practically depended our survival, and frequent were the exhortations to the miller on duty not to be too violent with the wretched little handle. Standing there in the sun—for though there were trees in the ravine, they were not high enough to shelter a man standing up—one was greatly tempted to hurry through the task of twenty hoppers full of grain, and so risk breaking the grinder. A quotation which Looney had learnt from a book read at Yozgad proved very apposite on these occasions. It was from a label pasted on to a French toy, and ran as follows: "Quoi qu'elle soit solidement montée, il ne faut pas brutaliser la machine!"

When enough flour was ready, some one would knead it into a lump of dough, which would then be divided up by the cook and flattened into little discs. These were baked several at a time on the metal cover of our dixie. When enough chupatties were ready, the cook would pick them up one by one, while some one else, not in sight of them, called out the names of the party at random. This was to get over the difficulty caused by the chupatties not being quite all of the same size. Similarly, after each brew of porridge had been distributed into the mugs by spoonfuls, we determined who was to have the scrapings of the pot by the method of "fingers-out." It was necessary to scrape the dixie each time to prevent the muddy paste which stuck to the bottom becoming burnt during the next brew; and the way to get this done thoroughly was to let some one have it to eat.

On the 4th September, Nobby discovered a shorter way up to the well, by first going a little down instead of up the ravine we were in. From that date onwards, except for one night when it was necessary to be on the spot in case of eventualities, Looney and Perce, and on one occasion Johnny, went up at dusk to sleep near the well. Although the mosquitoes were almost as troublesome there, they found that the air was quite invigorating—a great contrast to that in the ravine, where no refreshing breeze ever found its way.

By this time hardly one of us had any footgear left worthy

of the name, so we soaked an old *mashak* (skin water-bag) and a piece of raw hide, both of which had been brought down from the village on the second visit, with a view to using them for patch repairs. Both, however, proved too rotten to be of use, for they would not hold the stitches.

We had been a week in the ravine before any of us felt capable of farther exploration. To save time in getting to work again, on the last two evenings Cochrane and Nobby had had a little extra ration of porridge. Now at length, on the 6th September, they felt that it was within their powers to make another reconnaissance. Nothing more had been seen of the motor-boat, but the bay in which had been its anchorage on our first night on the coast seemed to offer the best prospect of finding a boat of some sort. Accordingly at 5 P.M. the pair set off once again down the ravine, hoping to arrive near the end of it before dark. And so began another anxious time for all, as we wondered what the final night of our first month of freedom would bring forth. It had not been easy to keep a correct tally of the date during the march to the coast. More than once there had been no opportunity of writing a diary for three days at a time; whilst on the coast one day was so much like another that to lose count of a day would have been easy. One of us, however, had kept a complete diary, and so we knew that we had now been at large for a month.

To celebrate this we had decided, if all went well that night, to have something very good to eat on the morrow. Every one voted for a plum-duff. Johnny had cooked a date-duff one evening during the siege of Kut, when his Indian *khansama* (cook) found the shell-fire too trying for his nerves. To Johnny then was given the post of *chef*. During the day each of the party did an extra fatigue on the coffee-grinder, with the result that by dusk we were able to set aside about two pounds of flour for the pudding. Its other ingredients were a couple of small handfuls of raisins and a pinch of salt. When Cochrane and Nobby departed operations commenced. The ingredients were mixed; the dough was kneaded on a flat rock and the resulting mass divided into two—for our little dixie was incapable of holding all at once. Each pudding was then rolled into a ball, tied up in a handkerchief, and boiled for two and a half hours. Thus it was close upon midnight before our dainties were ready for the morrow. The stillness of the nights in the ravine had often been broken by the melancholy chorus of a pack of jackals, usually far away but sometimes close at hand. We decided to take no risks of losing our duffs, and so slung them in the branches of a tree.

Meanwhile Cochrane and Nobby proceeded on their reconnaissance. We had made plans before they started in case of certain eventualities. One was that if the two were

recaptured they should lead the Turks to the rest of the party: it was realised that otherwise they might be very hard put to it to prove that they were escaped prisoners of war and not spies. A more cheerful eventuality was the possibility that the motor-boat might have returned unobserved. In that case, if a favourable opportunity of capturing it occurred, Cochrane and Nobby were to seize the vessel, make their way to Cyprus, and send back help for the rest four nights later. The rendezvous from which they would be fetched was to be on the headland opposite the little island on which stood the ruined castle. We eventually learnt that at the proposed rendezvous was stationed a battery of guns! It was well for us, therefore, that this plan had never to be executed.

Our two scouts had many exciting moments in their reconnaissance that night. They went to within a few hundred yards of the mouth of the ravine, and then, turning to the right, made their way up to higher ground by a side ravine. They climbed hurriedly, for the light was rapidly failing. From the top it was still impossible to overlook the bay which they wanted. They were moving along parallel to the sea when suddenly they heard voices. They could pick out four figures a little more than a hundred yards away, silhouetted against the sea on their left. These were Turks; they seemed to be looking out to sea, and after a minute or two squatted down on what appeared to be the flat roof of a house. At this juncture Cochrane swallowed a mosquito. Nobby says that to see him trying not to choke or cough would have been laughable at any less anxious time.

After this episode the two moved off with extra carefulness. It was now quite dark. They had not gone much farther when they again heard voices. This time they were quite close and coming towards them. Our pair took cover and waited: happily, at the last moment the owners of the voices turned off. In view of the number of people who seemed to be about it was no good increasing the risk of detection by having two persons on the move; so, soon after, Cochrane left Nobby in a good place of concealment, and went on scouting around by himself.

Half an hour later he came back. He had been able to overlook the cove, and there were two boats there. It was too dark, however, to see of what sort they were, and as there was a shed with a sentry on duty close to the boats, the only thing to do was to wait for daylight. The two now slept and took watch in turn. At the first sign of dawn they moved down to a rock, commanding a good view of the creek. One of the boats appeared to be a ship's cutter, some twenty-eight feet long, the other perhaps twenty feet in length. Having seen all they could hope for, they lost

no time in moving off, as it was now quite obvious that the house on which they had seen the four men on the previous evening was a look-out post; and it was now becoming dangerously light.

Instead of returning directly to the ravine, however, they made their way some distance down the coast to the S.W. They were able to see Selefké, and to recognise through the glasses a dhow in the river there, but it was some way inland. It was 11 A.M. before the reconnoitring party again reached the ravine. The news they brought gave us something definite to work for, and we decided that if we could finish our preparations in time we would make an attempt to seize one of the boats two nights later. That would be on the night of the 8th-9th September. There was much, however, to be done before then. Masts and spars, paddles and sails, and four days' supply of food for the sea journey had to be made ready. For the paddle heads, Cochrane and Nobby had brought back some flat thin pieces of board which they had found near a broken-down hut, and also a bit of ancient baked pottery which would serve as a whetstone for our very blunt knives and the adze.

On the strength of the good news, and to fortify ourselves for the work, we decided to wait no longer for our feast. The duffs were unslung from the tree, and each divided with as much accuracy as possible into eight pieces, so that we might have a slice apiece from either pudding in case they varied in quantity or quality. Both were superb, and the finest duffs ever made. We commented on their amazing sweetness and excellent consistency. In reality a raisin was only to be found here and there, and the puddings were not cooked right through. When we had finished, Old Man asserted that he could then and there and with ease demolish six whole duffs by himself. This started an argument.

"What!" cried one; "eat forty-eight pieces like the two you have just had! Impossible!"

"Granted; twenty pieces would go down easily enough," said another, "and the next ten with a fair appetite. But after that it wouldn't be so easy. You might manage another ten, but the last eight would certainly defeat you."

Old Man, however, stuck to his assertion and refused to come down by so much as a single slice. As it was impossible without the duffs under discussion to prove him right or merely greedy, the subject was allowed to drop.

By this date Perce was the only one of the party who still had some tobacco, English 'baccy too, for he smoked very little. To celebrate the discovery of the boats, he now broke into his reserve. A single cigarette was rolled and handed round from one to another of us. It only needed a couple of inhaled puffs to make each of us feel as if we were

going off under an anæsthetic. After the two or three puffs one thought it would be nice to sit down, and in a few seconds one felt it would be pleasanter still to lie down full length. That is what we did. The effect only lasted a minute or two, but it showed in what a weak condition we were.

On the evening trip to the nearer well it was found quite impossible to draw up any more water from it. It had been gradually drying up, and now the two on water fatigue could not scoop up even a spoonful of water when they let down a mug, so they had to go on to the well near the tower. This, too, was going dry, but still contained a little pool of very muddy water.

Shortly after four o'clock that afternoon Looney and Perce had started off on the third visit which was paid to the deserted village. They were armed with a long list of requisites: more cloth for sails; a big dixie for cooking large quantities of the reserve porridge at a time; some more grain; nails and any wood likely to be of use; cotton-wool for padding our feet when we went down to the shore; and many other things. They returned next morning at 9 A.M. with all the important articles, together with some hoop-iron and a few small poles. The latter were the very thing for the paddle-shafts. They also brought down some raw coffee beans which they had found in a little leather bag; these we roasted and ground next day, and enjoyed the two finest drinks of coffee we ever remember having had in our lives.

Meanwhile we had started cooking our food for the sea voyage. This was to consist of small chupatties and porridge, but the latter would not be cooked until the latest possible date for fear of its going bad. Forty reserve chupatties had been set aside before we retired to rest on the night after the feast-day. From that day onwards till we left the ravine the coffee-grinder was worked unceasingly from 5 A.M. till 7 or 8 P.M. There was no question of a six hours' day for us; for while we ground flour and porridge for the reserve, we had still to provide our own meals for the day. We realised then, if never before, the truth of the saying, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

Little of the 8th September had passed before we realised that it was hopeless to think of being ready by the following night. We therefore postponed the attempt, and settled down to our preparations in more deadly earnest. Cochrane decided on the size and shape of the sails, which were to be three in number. The rolls of cloth obtained from the village were about fourteen inches in width, and the biggest of the three sails was made with seven strips of the cloth. It was a good thing that we had still two big reels nearly untouched of the thread with which we had started from Yozgad.

When the strips had been sewn together, the edges of

the sail were hemmed. Later, pieces of canvas from Ellis's pack, which was cut up for the purpose, were added at the corners for the sake of additional strength. No one had a moment to spare. Those who were not sail-making were doing something else,—either at the mill, at work on the paddles, cutting branches off trees for the spars, fetching water, or cooking.

September 9th was similarly spent, but again on this day it soon became obvious that we should not be ready by nightfall. By the time we retired to our sleeping-places, however, our preparations were well advanced. Two of the sails were finished, the spars were cut, some of the paddles were completed, and the larger part of the chupatties and porridge cooked. The porridge was put into one of our packs. It was not a very clean receptacle, but being fairly waterproof would, we hoped, help to keep the porridge moist; for our chief fear with regard to the coming sea voyage was shortage of water.

On the 10th we worked continuously from daylight till 3.30 P.M., by which time our preparations were complete. Before moving off we hid away all non-essentials, so as to reduce our loads. With the big cooking-pot half-full of water, and the spars, sails, and paddles, these were going to be both heavy and cumbersome. We also buried our fezes and our copies of the map, lest, if we were recaptured, they should encourage the Turks to think that we were spies. For the same reason, any allusions to what we had seen on the coast, and to our visits to the deserted village, were carefully erased from diaries. These precautions completed, we carried our unwieldy loads down the ravine to a point opposite the shorter path to the wells. Here we left our impedimenta, and, taking only water-bottles, chargals, and the big cooking-pot, which had a cover and swing-handle, climbed up to the well near the tower and filled up. The water supply was almost exhausted, and it took an hour and a half to fill our receptacles and have a drink. It was impossible to practice the camel's plan, and drink more than we really needed at the time. It required a tremendous effort to force oneself to drink a mugful of these muddy dregs.

While the rest were filling the water-bottles, &c., Old Man and Nobby went off to a suitable point for a final look at part of our proposed route to the shore. Then all returned to the kits in the ravine. We had decided that we would move down to the beach in stockinged feet, so as to make as little noise as possible. For most of us this was not only a precaution but a necessity, since our party of eight now only possessed three pairs of wearable boots between us. We therefore padded our feet as best we could, and proceeded once more towards the sea.

The going was so difficult

that we had several times to help one another over the enormous boulders which filled the bottom of the ravine, and down precipitous places where there had once been small waterfalls.

At 7 P.M. we were not far from the mouth of the ravine. Here then the party halted, while Nobby, who had been there on two previous occasions, scouted on ahead. When he returned, reporting that all seemed clear, we crept on out of the ravine. It was now night. Walking very carefully, testing each footstep for fear of treading on a twig or loose stone and so making a noise, we came to a wall. This we crossed at a low place where it had been partially broken down, and a hundred yards beyond found ourselves approaching a line of telegraph poles and then the coast road. Up and down this we peered in the light of the young moon, and seeing no one went across. The ground here was level, but covered with big bushes and a few stunted firs, between which we made our way to the shore. It was grand to hear the lapping of the waves and smell the seaweed after nearly four years.

The creek, in which were the two rowing-boats, lay a mile to the west of us. We had intended to strike the shore where we were, for by walking to the creek along the edge of the sea the risk of stumbling against any tents or huts in the dark would be reduced; but it took us longer to reach our objective than we had expected. It was almost midnight when, a quarter of a mile from the creek, and near a place where a boat could be brought conveniently alongside, the party halted. Leaving the others here, Cochrane and Johnny were to try to get one of the two boats marked down four nights previously, and Nobby was to accompany them in case they needed help.

The shore line, which they now followed, rose rapidly to a steep cliff forty feet or more above the level of the sea. When within a hundred yards of the boat which they wanted, they found a way down to a narrow ledge two feet above the water. The moon had long set, but they could see the boat as a dark shadow against the water reflecting the starlight. Here, then, Cochrane and Johnny proceeded to strip. They continued, however, to wear a couple of pairs of socks in case the bottom should be covered with sharp spikes, as had been the rocky edge of the shore for the most part. They tied two pieces of thin rope round their waists with a clasp-knife attached to each. Thus equipped, they let themselves down off the ledge, and slipped quietly into the sea. Fortunately the water was warm; but it was phosphorescent too, so they had to swim very slowly to avoid making any unnecessary ripple.

As they neared the boat, which now loomed big above them, some one in the shadow of the cliff a few yards away

coughed. Next moment they heard the butt of a rifle hitting a rock as the sentry (for such he must have been) shifted his position. Hardly daring to breathe, they swam to the side of the boat farther from him and held on to it. Here the water was about six feet deep. After waiting a few minutes to let any suspicions on the part of the sentry subside, they moved along to the bow of the boat.

They had hoped to find it anchored by a rope, but to their great disappointment it was moored with a heavy iron chain. Speaking in very low whispers, they decided that one should go under the water and lift the anchor, while the other, with his piece of rope, tied one of the flukes to a link high up in the chain. When the anchor was thus raised clear of the bottom, they would swim quietly away, towing the boat. Accordingly, Cochrane dived and lifted the anchor, while Johnny tied his rope round a fluke and made it fast to a link as far up the chain as possible. They then let go.

With what seemed to them a terrific noise, the chain rattled over the gunwale till the anchor was once more on the bottom. Were they discovered? Another cough! They did not dare to move. Could the plash of the water lapping against the sides of the creek have muffled the sound of the rattling chain? If only the chain had been fixed! But perhaps a short length only had been loose.

Another attempt was made. This time it was Johnny who lifted the anchor, while Cochrane tied his rope to it. Unfortunately he had the rope still round his waist, and when the anchor dropped he was carried down with it. How lucky that he had his clasp-knife! For though he was free in a few seconds, he came to the surface spluttering out the water he had swallowed. It was a near thing that he was not drowned. Where, meantime, was the anchor? Little did they realise that it was lying once more on the bottom and laughing at their efforts to carry off the quarry that night.

Some point of the chain, of course, must be attached to the boat, but it was risky to continue getting rid of the spare length by the present method. Besides, there was no more rope with which to tie up the anchor to the chain. As for getting into the boat and weighing anchor from there, it would be sheer madness. The sentry would be certain to see them, naked and wet as they were.

By this time they were both shivering violently with cold, though, as has been said, the water was quite warm. As a last attempt they tried to take the boat out to the end of the chain by swimming away with it farther from the sentry. Again the chain rattled over the gunwale, and there was nothing for it but to admit defeat.

Slowly they swam back to

the ledge where Nobby was awaiting them. He said they had been away for an hour and twenty minutes, so it was not surprising that they had felt cold. With numbed fingers they put on their clothes, and climbed gloomily up the cliff. By this time the walking over sharp rocks had cut their socks and padding to pieces, so that they were marching almost barefoot, a very painful operation.

On their rejoining the party, the sad tale of failure was told. As the time was 3 A.M., the only thing to do was to get into the best cover we could find near the coast and sleep till dawn. About a hundred yards inland we lay down in some small bushes beneath stunted pine-trees. There we slept.

Our thirty-fifth morning found us in a state of great depression. There seemed now no chance left of getting out of the country. As we lay in our hiding-places we reviewed the situation in an almost apathetic mood. We were on the eastern side of a W-shaped bay, a mile wide, and opening southwards. Its eastern arm was the creek, in which was the boat we had failed to capture. There was a similar western arm, the two creeks being separated by a narrow spit of land. From quite early in the morning motor-lorries could be seen and heard winding their way along the tortuous road. In several places this closely followed the coast line, and at one or two was carried on causeways across the sea itself. We lay on a headland on the seaward side of the Turkish encampment, and were overlooked by the look-out post on the cliff-side.

At noon a council of war was held. As we were lying dotted about some distance from one another, for the time being we all crept into an old shelter made of branches, not many yards from us. There matters were discussed. Although several schemes were put forward, going back to the ravine in which we had spent so many wearisome days was not one of them. To return there would have made us into raving lunatics. The final decision was to make another attempt that night to seize the boat; this time we would have four of us in the water. If that failed, about the most attractive proposal was to go boldly on to the coast road and by bluff obtain a lift on a motor-lorry, demanding as Germans to be taken in a westerly direction to the nearest big town, Selefké: we might get a boat of some sort there. The chief lure of this scheme was that, should the lorry-driver believe our story, we should cover a few miles without walking on our flat feet. This was a fascinating thought indeed, for despite nearly a fortnight on the coast we had no wish to set out on the tramp again.

Two or three of us, however, thought we might sum up the energy to march eastwards along the road in the hope of finding a boat in the bay of Ayasoh. But even if we did this there was still the

difficulty about food and drink. Unless we replenished our supply we should have to undertake a sea voyage of at least a hundred miles with only two days' rations and perhaps a water-bottle full of water apiece. The consensus of opinion was thus come to that if we failed again that night we might as well give ourselves up the next day. We then went back into our old and safer hiding-places.

At about two o'clock in the afternoon we heard the sound of a far-off motor. This was no lorry. It came from a different direction. In a few seconds we were all listening intently.

"It's only another lorry after all!"

"No, it can't be. It's on the sea side of us!"

As the minutes passed, the noise became more and more distinct. Then our hearts leapt within us, as there came into the bay, towing a lighter and a dinghy, the motor-tug which we had last seen the day after we had reached the coast. Skirting the shore not three hundred yards from where we lay, the boats disappeared into the eastern creek.

Apathy and depression were gone in a second. Excitement and — this we like to remember — a deep sense of thankfulness for this answer to our prayers took their place.

The motor-boat was flying at her bows a Turkish and at her stern a German flag, but most of her crew of seven or eight looked to us like Greeks. In the lighter were over twenty Turks.

Another council of war took place, but of a very different type from the last. All were hopeful, and we made our plans in high spirits. Throughout our discussion, however, ran the assumption that some of the crew would be on board the motor-boat, and we should have to bribe them to take us across to Cyprus. It never entered our heads for a moment that any other scheme would be possible. In fact, when about an hour before sunset the dinghy with a few of the crew and some water-breakers on board was rowed across to a point opposite us on the western side of the bay (where there must have been a spring of fresh water), we determined to hail them on their return journey.

At one point they came within three hundred yards of us. In answer to our shouting and whistling, they stopped rowing and looked in our direction. They must have seen us, but they refused to take any further notice. Whom did they take us for? And why did they not report our presence when they went ashore? No one came to search for us; and as the mountain had not come to Mahomet, Mahomet would have to go to the mountain. Some one would have to swim out to the boat that night. As the dusk of our 36th night fell, a ration of chupatties and a couple of handfuls of raisins were issued. A move was then made to the nearest point on the shore at which there was a suitable place for a boat to come along-

side. There we waited till the moon set at about 8.30. In the meantime we drank what water remained in the big dixie. This left us with only our water-bottles full. At this time our best Turkish scholar was feeling very sick. The last scrapings from the pack containing the porridge had fallen to him, and as all of it had turned sour during the previous night, Grunt's extra ration was proving a not unmixed blessing. This was a serious matter, as we relied on him to negotiate with the motor-boat's crew. However, at 9 P.M. he and Cochrane, the Old Man and Nobby, set forth on the last great venture. The others moved all the kit close down to the edge of the rock where a boat could come in.

An anxious wait ensued. The four had set out at 9 o'clock, but it was not till 11.30 that Looney, with his last reserve—half a biscuit—gone, saw a boat coming silently towards him. In a trice the other three were awakened. Was it friend or foe? She had four men on board: they were our four. The moment the boat touched at the rock the kit was thrown in. Cochrane had done magnificent work. He had swum round the creek, found out that there was no one in the motor-boat, cut away the dinghy belonging to the lighter, swum back with it, and fetched the other three.

Eight hopeful fugitives were soon gently paddling the dinghy towards the creek, keeping, so far as might be, in the shadow of the cliffs; for though the moon was down, the stars seemed to make the open bay unpleasantly light. As noiselessly as possible the dinghy came alongside the motor-boat and made fast. The creek here was about sixty yards wide. The tug, moored by a heavy chain and anchor, was in the middle of it. Some fifteen yards away was the lighter; on this were several men, one of whom was coughing the whole time we were "cutting out" the motor-boat. This took us a full hour.

On trying the weight of the chain and anchor, Cochrane decided to loose the motor-boat from her anchorage by dropping the chain overboard. He did not think it would be possible to weigh the anchor. Odd lengths of cord were collected and joined up in readiness for lowering the end of the chain silently when the time came. But success was not to be attained so easily. Boarding the motor-boat, Nobby and Perce had, foot by foot, got rid of almost all the chain which lay in the bows, when another score of fathoms were discovered below deck. It would be quicker, after all, to weigh anchor, and by superhuman efforts this was at length achieved without attracting the attention of the enemy, our coats and shirts being used as padding over the gunwale.

As soon as the anchor was weighed, we connected the motor-boat with the dinghy

by a tow-rope found on the former; all got back into the dinghy, and in this we paddled quietly away. With our home-made paddles and heavy tow we were unable to make much headway. With six paddles in the water, we could credit ourselves with a speed of not so much as a single knot.

Once clear of the bay, Cochrane again went aboard the motor-boat and this time had a look at the engine. We had remaining at this time about an inch of candle, but this served a very useful purpose. By its glimmer Cochrane was able to discover and light a hurricane-lamp. He told us the joyous news that there was a fair quantity of paraffin in the tank. Unfortunately no petrol was to be found, and it seemed unlikely that we should be able to start the engine from cold on paraffin alone. So weak indeed were we, that it was all we could do to turn over the engine at all. While frantic efforts were being made by Cochrane and Nobby to start her, those in the dinghy continued paddling. After three hours all were very tired of it and very grateful for a slight off-shore breeze which gave us the chance of setting a sail. Cochrane rigged up our mainsail on the motor-boat; all then clambered aboard the latter. Our speed was now quite good and many times that of our most furious paddling. Suddenly looking back we saw the dinghy adrift and disappearing in the darkness behind us. Grunt, who had been holding the rope at the dinghy end, had omitted to make fast on coming on board the motor-boat. The dinghy still contained all our kit; so to recover this, including as it did what food and water remained to us, Cochrane and Johnny jumped overboard and swam back to it. The sail on the motor-boat had been furled, and in a few minutes the dinghy was again in tow.

After this slight misadventure the engine-room was once more invaded, and Looney and Cochrane experimented with the magneto. There was a loose wire and vacant terminal which they were uncertain whether to connect or not. Eventually, with Nobby turning over the engine, they obtained a shock with the two disconnected. Two were now put on to the starting-handle. But the cramped space produced several bruised heads and nothing else as pair after pair struggled on.

At length at 4.30 A.M., little more than an hour before dawn, the engine started up with a roar, in went the clutch, and off went the motor-boat at a good seven knots. At the time when the engine began firing, Nobby, who was feeling very much the worse for his exertions in weighing anchor followed by his efforts to start the motor, was lying on deck in the stern. Startled by the sudden series of explosions, he thought for a moment that a machine-gun had opened fire at short range, till he discovered that he was lying on the exhaust-pipe, the end of which was led up on deck!

CHAPTER XV.

We reckoned that by this time we were some three miles from the creek, so we could hope that the roar of the engine would be inaudible to those on shore; sunrise on the 12th September was a little before 6 A.M., so that dawn should have found us still within view from the land. A kindly mist, however, came down and hid us till we were well out to sea. As soon as it was light enough we tried to declutch in order to transfer our kit from the dinghy to the tug. But the clutch was in bad order and would not come out. The alternative was to haul up the dinghy level with the tug, with the motor still running, and then to transfer all our goods and chattels on to the deck. It was a difficult task, but it was done. We then turned the dinghy adrift. This meant the gain of an additional two knots.

It now seemed as if our troubles really were nearing their end. The engine was running splendidly, the main tank was full to the brim; there was enough and to spare of lubricating oil, and in a barrel lashed to the deck in the stern was found some more paraffin. A beaker contained sufficient water to give us each a mugful. It was brackish, but nectar compared to the well-water which we had been drinking for the last fortnight. We also allowed ourselves some chupatties and a handful of raisins.

Our principal fear now was of being chased by one of the seaplanes which we thought to be stationed at Mersina, not many miles away. We had seen one on two occasions during our stay in the ravine. Time went on, however, and nothing appeared. Instead of looking behind us for a seaplane we began to look ahead, hoping to come across one of our own patrol boats. It says much for the deserted condition of those waters that during our fortnight on the coast and our voyage of about 120 miles to Cyprus we saw not a single boat save those five that we had seen in the creek.

Discussing the matter of the discovery of the loss of the motor-boat and the subsequent action of the crew, we came to the cheerful conclusion that probably the loss would not be divulged to the authorities for a considerable period. The rightful crew would know what to expect as a punishment for their carelessness, and would either perjure themselves by swearing that the boats had sunk at their moorings, or thinking discretion even better than perjury, disappear into the deserted hinterland through which we had marched. Should these two guesses be wrong, there was yet another course which we thought possible, though not so probable, for the crew to take. Thinking that the motor-boat and dinghy had drifted away, they would

not mention their disappearance till a thorough search had been made of all bays and creeks within a few miles of the locality.

The cherry of this delightful cocktail of fancy was very palatable; whatever else happened, the occupants of the lighter, agitated to the extreme and dinghyless, would have to swim ashore, and this thought amused us greatly.[1]

Now for a few words about the motor-boat. She was named the *Hertha*, and boasted both a Turkish and a German flag. In addition to her name she had the Turkish symbol for "2" painted large on either side of her bows. Broad in the beam for her 38 feet of length, she was decked in, and down below harboured a 50-h.p. motor. In the bows of the engine-room we found a couple of Mauser rifles dated 1915, with a few rounds of small-arm ammunition; some of the latter had the nickel nose filed off to make them "mushroom" on impact. We also discovered a Very's pistol, with a box of cartridges; trays of spanners and spare parts for the motor, and two lifebelts taken from English ships whose names we have forgotten. On deck, immediately abaft the engine-room hatchway, was the steering-wheel, while farther astern was the barrel containing the extra paraffin, a can of lubricating oil, and various empty canisters.

Till noon the sea was sufficiently rough to be breaking continually over the bows, and three of the party were feeling the effect of the roll. To the rest, to be thus rocked in the cradle of the deep, borne ever nearer to freedom, was a sensation never to be forgotten. The motor was going splendidly, and we all took turns at the wheel, steering by the "sun-compass," and, with the exception of Cochrane, very badly.

By 1.30 P.M. we could recognise the dim outline of the high mountain-range of Cyprus: on the strength of this we each ate another two chupatties and a handful of raisins, finishing our meal with a quarter of a mugful of water.

But we were a trifle premature in our lavishness. Our troubles were not at an end, for half an hour later the engine began to fail, and, while Cochrane was below looking for the cause of the trouble, she petered out. The fault

[1] The following is an extract from a letter received from Lieut.-Colonel Keeling since we wrote the above: "At Adana I met the Turkish Miralai (=Brigadier-General) — Beheddin Bey — who was in command on the coast. He was fully expecting the party [*i.e.*, our party], and put all the blame on the men in the boat [*i.e.*, the lighter] to which the motor-boat was tied. These men were all Turks, the Germans being on shore. The loss of the motor-boat was discovered before dawn, and at dawn a hydroplane was sent out to look for her; but she only spotted a small boat a few miles out, presumably the boat with which they had towed the motor-boat to a safe distance before starting the engine. Beheddin Bey drew me a plan showing exactly how everything had happened."

was subsequently traced to the over-heating of one of the main shaft bearings, the oil feed-pipe to which had been previously broken, and had vibrated from its place. Having satisfied himself that no serious damage was done, Cochrane decided to wait half an hour for the bearing to cool. During this time Old Man and Looney had a mid-sea bathe to refresh themselves, while Perce and Johnny tried to boil some water for tea. The fire was made on an iron sheet, on which some bights of chain were shaped into a cooking place for the big dixie. The roll of the boat, however, though very much less than in the morning, proved too great to allow the dixie to remain steady on the chain, so the idea of tea had to be abandoned. We now had leisure to observe the sea, and we decided that its colour was the most wonderful we had ever seen—a clear purple-blue.

When the bearing had cooled, we tried to start the engine again. One pair followed another on the starting-handle, but all to no purpose. All four sparking-plugs were examined: the feed-pipe, separator, and carburetter were taken down. Except for a little water in the separator, all seemed correct. We refilled the tank with paraffin from the barrel on deck, but our renewed attempts still met with no success. Our efforts to turn the crank became more and more feeble, until, by 4.30 P.M., we lay down on deck utterly exhausted.

Just before sunset we decided we would make a final attempt to start up. Should that be unsuccessful, we would set the sails; but to our great relief she fired at the second attempt. Our joy was somewhat tempered by her refusing to run for more than a few minutes at a time. It was found that this was caused by the feed-pipe from the tank repeatedly choking, owing, no doubt, to grit in the oil obtained from the barrel, which, as we had noticed when pouring it in, was very dirty.

After dark, Cochrane did all the steering; while down in the engine-room were Looney as mechanic, and Old Man and Johnny as starters. Meantime, Perce sat on deck with his feet through the hatchway against the clutch-lever below him. By jamming this hard down and tapping the clutch with a hammer, it was possible to persuade the cones to separate when required. For over four hours we spent our time starting and stopping. Our two best runs lasted for thirty and thirty-five minutes. Usually a run lasted for five or less. We took it in turns to tap the feed-pipe with a piece of wood, in the hope of keeping it from clogging; but it was of little use. Each time the engines stopped, Looney took down the separator and feed-pipe and blew through them, getting a mouthful of paraffin for his pains. When all was ready again, the two starters, though almost dead-beat, managed somehow to turn the crank.

By 10 P.M. we were becoming desperate. It was only Cochrane's cheering news that we were within two hours' run of the coast that kept the engine-room staff going. A run of five minutes meant a mile nearer home, so we carried on.

An hour later, Cochrane told us all to sit on the starboard side, for it was on this side that the feed-pipe left the tank. This was sheer genius on his part. From that very moment the wilful engine behaved herself, and ran obediently till we meant her to stop. As we neared the coast, at a distance, perhaps, of three miles from it, Nobby fired off a Very's light, in case there were any patrol boats in the neighbourhood; but no answering light appeared. Next day, in Cyprus, we asked the police if they had seen the light. They had not seen it, they said, but had heard it. This proves how wonderfully sound travels over water, for we would not for one second doubt a policeman's story. But, as is hardly necessary to point out, a Very's signal, like little children, should be seen and not heard.

Having had only our memories of the bearing and distance to Cyprus from Rendezvous X to guide us, we had worked out in the ravine that the bearing on which we had to steer would be S. 50° W. On sighting the island in the afternoon, we had found that this was too much to the west, so Cochrane had altered the course to make for the western end of the high range of mountains visible about due south of us. When a couple of miles from the shore we turned eastwards, and moved parallel to the coast, on the look-out for a good anchorage, if possible, near a village. Finally, about a hundred yards from the shore, we dropped anchor in a wide bay.

On leaving Yozgad each of our party had possessed a watch, but by this time only two were in working order, and those were Old Man's and Johnny's. As the chain rattled over the side, the latter looked at the time, to find that the hand once more pointed to the witching hour of midnight. This timepiece served its purpose well, for it was not till an hour later, when it had ceased to be so essential, that it shared the fate of most of its comrades and was broken. It was interesting to find later, on comparing the Old Man's watch with Cyprus time, that there was only two minutes' difference between them. We had checked our time occasionally by noticing when one of the "pointers" of the Great Bear was vertically beneath the Pole Star; the solar time when this occurred on any night had been worked out before we left Yozgad. Fairly accurate time-keeping was of importance, for on this depended the successful use of both the "sun-compass" and the star-charts.

And so we had reached Cyprus, but we were all in too dazed a condition to realise for the moment what

it meant; in fact, it took many days to do so. On arrival in the bay, Cochrane, with his keen sense of smell, had declared that there were cows not far off, and at about 3 o'clock we heard a cock crow. We said we would eat our hats, or words to that effect, if we did not have that bird for breakfast. There was not a single light on shore, and we had no idea whereabouts in Cyprus we had dropped anchor. As the stars disappeared in the coming light of dawn, we saw the coast more clearly. Then by degrees what we thought were ruins on the coast, rocks a couple of hundred yards east of us took form; later these proved to be the still occupied Greek monastery of Acropedi. Then a house or two near by stood distinct; then trees; and finally our eyes beheld not a mile away a large village, boasting churches, mosques, and fine buildings set in trees, and beyond a mountain-range rising sheer from the very houses.

With the first light came a man to the beach opposite us. We shouted to him in English, French, and Turkish, but he appeared not to understand. Soon he was joined by two or three others. Then they started arriving in tens and twenties, men, women, and children. Mounted gendarmes galloped down. We shouted ourselves hoarse, but to no purpose. We tried several times to start up the motor, but we could not turn the handle. Finally Cochrane jumped overboard in a shirt borrowed for the occasion, as it was longer and less torn than his own. He must have felt still rather undressed for the ordeal, as when he reached the water he shouted for his hat, which we threw to him. Clothed thus he swam towards the shore. In two feet of water his courage gave way, and his modesty made him sit down. So situated he harangued the crowd.

Finally there appeared a gendarme who understood English. He said there was an English police officer in the village which was named Lapethos; so, borrowing a pencil and a piece of paper, Cochrane wrote a note to the Englishman reporting our arrival. He explained to the gendarme that we wanted to bring the boat ashore, but that we could not start the engine. When this was understood several men at once stripped and swam out to the rest of us. Cochrane came back smoking a cigarette, which he passed round when he got on board. The Cypriotes too brought cigarettes perched behind their ear like a clerk's pencil, and these we smoked with great appreciation. The scheme was for us to weigh the anchor, give the men towing-ropes, and they would then pull the boat inshore. The men, though small, were well built. As they had started swimming almost before they could walk, it was no hardship for them to tow our heavy vessel. Laughing and shouting, they pulled us along until they thought a rest would be

pleasant, then they came on board again. They shouted now and then in sheer lightness of heart; they were very cheery fellows. We were not towed straight inshore, but to a small natural jetty a hundred and fifty yards west of us along the beach.

Here we stepped on British soil, eight thin and weary ragamuffins. We know our hearts gave thanks to God, though our minds could not grasp that we were really free.

Our story is nearly at an end, though we have yet to bring our eight travellers to England. Should our already distressed readers hope against hope that the two authors will be torpedoed long before arriving there, we will put an end to any such fond anticipations by telling them truthfully that we were not. In order, however, to soothe in a small way their injured feelings, let us divulge the fact that we, with all but two of the party, spent several days ill in hospital before we reached home. One nearly died from malignant malaria, doubtless caused by the bites of the mosquitoes on the Turkish coast.

Having given the reader this sop we will continue. Surrounded by a large but kindly crowd, we sat down on the rocks above the natural jetty on which we had landed, and waited for an answer to Cochrane's note. In the meanwhile a gift arrived from the monastery—a basket containing bread, cheese, olives, and pomegranates. No lark's tongues, nor the sunny halves of peaches, have ever been so welcome, and we had a wonderful meal, finishing with clean sweet water and cigarettes. About half an hour later an officer, in what looked to us then extraordinarily smart uniform, came down to see why this crowd had collected, and on hearing our story conducted us to the village. The road led through orchards whose trees were heavy with pomegranates and figs; past vineyards and banana palms, tobacco plants and cotton. Everywhere we could see the signs of a fertile prosperous land, and it struck us forcibly how different it all was from the barren tracts through which we had toiled down to the coast of Asia Minor. No more vivid testimony could be borne to the contrast between British and Turkish sovereignty.

The officer with us did not belong to the police, but was on survey work in the island. We were taken, however, to the barracks of the Cyprus Mounted Police, and here, seated on chairs on the verandah, we were given coffee with sugar in it. Everything seemed wonderful. We could smoke as much as we wanted, and the barracks were scrupulously clean and tidy. One by one we went into the garden near a whitewashed well, and were shaved by one of the C.M.P. After a good wash, we brushed our hair for the first time for over five weeks. All that time we had had to be satisfied with a comb. As

soon as Lieutenant S—— of the Police arrived, we were taken upstairs to have breakfast, and right royally did we feast. The meal ended, we were given the 'Lapethos Echo,' which contained Haig's and Foch's communiqués of the 9th September. These too were wonderful, and we were greatly amazed by the change which had come over the main battle front since we saw the last paper at Yozgad before we left; then the Germans were, so we were to believe, knocking at the gates of Paris.

After breakfast a hot bath and clean clothes were provided for each of us, our rags being collected in a corner with a view to their cremation. A Greek doctor anointed us with disinfectant, and bandaged anything we had in the way of sores or cuts.

At about 3 P.M. two carriages arrived and our triumphal progress continued. We first paid a final visit to the motor-boat, collecting our few trophies in the way of rifles and flags. This done, we were driven to Kyrenia, a coast town eight or nine miles to the east of us—the police officer and Greek doctor stopping the carriages at every roadside inn to regale us with Turkish delight and iced water. At Kyrenia we were expected by the British residents, who accommodated us for the night and treated us with the truest British hospitality. Our sensations in finding ourselves once more between sheets in a spring-bed are more easily imagined than described. Late next morning, after a bathe in the sea and when many snapshots of the party had been taken, we were driven off in a motor-lorry, by Captain G—— of the A.S.C., to Famagusta, the port of Cyprus on the eastern coast. It was an eighty-mile drive, and what with stopping at Nikosia for lunch and at Larnaka for tea, we did not reach Famagusta and the mess of the Royal Scots, who had kindly offered us a home, till 9 P.M.

All the recollections of our four days' stay in Cyprus are of the pleasantest description, as were those also of our voyage to Egypt in two French trawlers. As much cannot be said of the fortnight we spent in Port Said, where we passed the first night sleeping on the sand in a transit camp and most of the rest in hospital—nor of our ten days in a troop train crossing Italy and France. During this time we learnt—what perhaps we needed to be taught—that we were after all the least important people in the world. But to tell of these adventures in detail would be to fill another book. Suffice it to say that we were sustained by a few comic episodes: on one occasion, in Italy, we spent five minutes talking Italian, based on slender memories of school-day Latin, to men in another troop train, before we discovered that they were Frenchmen. On another, in France, we remember opening a conversation in French with our engine-driver, who proved to be an American.

At length, on the 16th Oct-

ober 1918, five of our party reached England together,—preceded by Cochrane, who had managed to arrange for a seat in a "Rapide" across Europe, and followed by the Old Man and Nobby, who had had to remain in hospital in Egypt for another fortnight.

Soon after arrival in England, each of us had the very great honour of being individually received by His Majesty the King. His kindly welcome and sympathetic interest in what we had gone through will ever remain a most happy recollection.

Finally, we arranged a dinner for all our party, the date fixed being 11th November. This, as it turned out, was Armistice Night, and with that night of happy memories, and a glimpse of the eight companions once again united, we will draw the tale of our adventures to a close.

There is one note, however, which we feel we must add before laying down our pens. Many of our readers will have already realised that there was something more than mere luck about our escape. St Paul, alluding to his adventures in almost the very same region as that traversed by us, describes experiences very like our own. Like him, we were "in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, . . . in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea; . . . in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

To be at large for thirty-six days before escaping from the country, to have been so frequently seen, sometimes certainly to have aroused suspicion, and yet to have evaded recapture, might perhaps be attributed to Turkish lack of organisation. Our escape from armed villagers; our discovery of wells in the desert, of grain in an abandoned farmhouse, and of the water (which just lasted out our stay) in the ruined wells on the coast; and finally, the timely reappearance of the motor-tug with all essential supplies for the sea voyage,—any one even of these facts, taken alone, might possibly be called "luck," or a happy coincidence; taken in conjunction with one another, however, they compel the admission that the escape of our party was due to a higher Power.

It would seem as if it were to emphasise this that on at least three occasions, when everything seemed to be going wrong, in reality all was working out for our good. Our meeting with and betrayal by the two "shepherds" ought, humanly speaking, to have proved fatal to the success of our venture: we had thrown away valuable food, and were committed to crossing a desert which previously, without a guide, we had looked upon as an impassable obstacle. And yet we know now that it would have been entirely beyond us to have reached the coast by the

route which we had mapped out to Rendezvous X, and that it was only the deflection from our proposed route caused by this rencontre which brought the land journey within our powers of endurance. It was the same when we were forced, against our will, to replenish supplies at a village; the breakdown of one of the party which compelled us to do so undoubtedly saved us from making an impossible attempt to reach the coast with the food which remained at the time. Still more remarkable was our failure to take the rowing-boat on the night of 10th/11th September, which resulted in the motor-tug falling into our hands and being the final means of our escape on the night following.

We feel then that it was a Divine intervention which brought us through. It was in addition an answer to prayer. Throughout the preparations for escape every important step was made a matter of prayer; and when the final scheme was settled, friends in England were asked, by means of a code message, to intercede for its success. That message, we now know, was received and very fully acted upon. We had also friends in Turkey who were interceding for us; and on the trek it was more than once felt that some one at home or in Turkey was remembering us at the time. To us, then, the hand of Providence was manifest in our escape. We see in it an answer to prayer. Our way, of course, might have been made smoother, but perhaps in that case we should not have learnt the same lessons of dependence upon God. As it was, it was made manifest to us that, even in these materialistic days, to those who can have faith, "the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save."

OPPORTUNITY.

BY DOUGLAS WALSHE.

OSMAN'S father was a *hammal*, and he really could carry a piano on his back. That has nothing to do with the story, but I simply can't leave it out. The sight of Osman père staggering with a piano through the streets of Salonica is one of my most vivid memories of the Balkans. He was incredibly bent and filthy—five feet two if straightened out, which he never was, and three feet nine with the piano on his back. His clothes were rags, many-coloured and astonishingly thick. The temperature varied between twenty degrees of frost and ninety odd in the shade, but the costume was always the same. It was only the British who undressed into "shorts" for the heat. Summer and winter, Osman père wore a red cummerbund several yards long, thick baggy underclothes, and thick patched trousers on top, a shapeless upper garment of a carpet-like material, and a fez.

So much for Osman's father.

I know very little about his mother. Women don't matter in the Balkans. It is safe, however, to assert that whatever else she might be, she was no "moon of delight." Also that she worked much harder than either the *hammal* or his son. Osman père would see to that.

The family residence was situated in the Turkish quarter. There was no bath h. and c., or any other convenience whatsoever. Drawing-room, dining-room, morning-room, and bedrooms were all thrown into one . . . nine feet by seven. It was, in short, what plain-spoken folks would have called a shed, or a British house agent have advertised as "a self-contained maisonette, convenient of access to the City." You stepped out of the front door—not too boldly, or you might step into the mansion across the way—held your nose as you turned right, and fifty paces brought you to the top of Venizelos Street, the hub of the universe.

There was very little furniture in Osman's home. The floor was earth, and the three beds were "made" direct upon it. One was occupied by Osman, one by his sister, and one by his father and mother. Each had a pile of rags for a mattress, and each was covered with a greasy, ragged eider-down—for purposes of concealment rather than additional warmth. Under the quilt on number one was a French horse-cloth; number two boasted a long Italian cavalry cloak; and number three, the marital couch, sported a British Army blanket.

There were no chairs or seats of any description. In the *hammal's* domicile, one lived as one slept . . . on the floor Everything was on the floor,

even the family's spare garments: for as there were neither pegs nor nails in the walls, there was no other place for them. The only actual article of furniture was a table, ten inches high, sometimes used for meals.

A poor home . . . . but rich in love and insect life.

Stove or range there was none. Bread was begged in war-time from Johnny (*anglicè*, Tommy)—beautiful white cake-like stuff—a great treat, however stale. French bread was even better, but most difficult to obtain. Frenchmen do not give readily to enemies. Johnny is different. Even old women can get things out of Johnny. . . .

When absolutely unavoidable, bread was also bought in dark flat round loaves in the shops—dingy open-fronted places with public ovens for those who could afford such things. All the *hammal's* cooking, however, was done outside, among the smells, in a copper pan over a wood fire. Roasts were unknown. *When* there was meat, it was stew. Strings of bright red paprika, for flavouring purposes, hung to dry on the outside walls, gave the establishment a sort of meretricious decoration. In the driest corner inside there was also a heap of ripening maize-cobs, some day to become bread when money was short.

The roof leaked, and nobody thought of trying to mend it, or minded that the rain made the house a welter of slimy mud. Allah was Good, and the sun was hot. The floor soon dried. The one window was broken and stuffed with rags. Allah was Great, but glass was dear.

The landlord, a Spanish Jew, had forgotten or never learned the Turkish word for "repairs." But he always remembered "rent."

Furtively one spat upon his infidel shadow on the pavement in front of his draper's shop in the Rue Ignatia—but one paid, all the same, in cash or kind.

The "kind" consisted in Osman, a boot-black, daily cleaning the landlord's shoes, and the *hammal* doing all his porterage. The difference was made up in drachmae.

Life was always dear, and food was always scarce, but both were dearer and scarcer now that all these foreign soldiers and unbelievers had got themselves between the Faithful and the Sun. They brought much money—and of course one got what one could; but a *hammal* and a boot-black had few chances of fleecing them. . . . Everything had gone up. Allah was great and Mahomed was his prophet, but prices were painfully high and the feasts of the Faithful were unworthy of His goodness.

The mother and sister worked in the fields, walking four miles each way to Kalamaria morning and evening in the season. The sister, Fatima——

But this is Osman's story, so enough of his family.

He was eighteen in 1917—a handsome, dark-eyed, lazy

youth, who thought much of women and little of work. His profession, that of a boot-black, was chosen because in that easy occupation one could loll in the sun, look at the women, and earn a few leptae when necessity drove. Most lads drifted on to something else before eighteen, but Osman found it difficult to discover another opening suitable to his temperament.

He was not without education. He could read with difficulty, if compelled; and write, with his tongue out, if writing were absolutely unavoidable—or profitable. His arithmetic, however, was faulty. In the matter of giving change he invariably made an error in his own favour. Sometimes he was kicked for it; sometimes it came off—especially with the British. He was not alone in this foible. Malaria, murder, and wrong change appear to be indigenous to the Balkan soil.

He spoke Turkish, modern Greek, and "Macedonski" fluently (especially the bad bits), though Turkish was the only tongue he had learned during his brief period at school. He also, as a result of the war which, so far as he was concerned, began in October 1915, when the Allies landed at Salonica, spoke Franco-British when opportunity offered. . . .

This language is even simpler than Esperanto, and for the wealth of meanings concentrated in single words it knocks spots off Chinese. Its vocabulary is ten words all told, and numbers are by fingers. "Feenish" is its foundation and principal word. What "finish" can be made to mean, space forbids me to try to tell. Suffice it to record that you say "Feenish" to a Frenchman and "Feenish Johnny" to a Britisher, whether he is a brigadier or a corporal. Further detailed investigations must be left to the philologists. I really must get on with the story.

Osman's opportunity arose on the day of the Great Fire—which started in the afternoon of Saturday, August 18, 1917. A gentleman in a residence very similar to Osman's father's was frying aubergine in oil. The pan overturned—and the fat was in the fire.

It so happened that one of the miseries of the climate—the Vardar wind—was very much in evidence at the time. This wind is a persistent powerful blast that "carries on" at intervals all the year round for three or four days at a stretch. It is damnable in the cold weather and disgusting in the hot. Sleep is difficult on account of the racket, and tents and tempers are torn to shreds. Anything more ideal for fanning a fire on a hot August afternoon it would be hard to imagine.

The gentleman whose culinary clumsiness was to render a hundred thousand people homeless took to his heels, and even so the fire almost caught him. The whole of the Ghetto and most of the Turkish quarter were involved with unbelievable rapidity. These nests of

hovels crowded together in narrow snaky streets, mainly constructed of wood, half-rotten and baked tinder-dry by the sun, were easy prey. They welcomed their devourer. They flashed into fire in strings and passed it on with a roar and a hiss. Whole streets burst into flame at a time.

Salonica had previously been burned down on fourteen other occasions — and the fifteenth found her armed only with a few hand-pumping engines, one dated "Sun Fire Office, 1710." The fire smiled —and burnt them!

Osman, seated at his ease on the pavement of the Place de la Liberté, heard about the fire and went on rolling a cigarette, just as the British and French officers and nurses in the famous café opposite went on suctioning lemon squashes and eating ices. It was very hot—Allah was great —and it would be hotter at a fire.

But gradually the fire forced itself on Osman's attention. Refugees began to flock down to the sea-front close by. A procession of sewing-machines, wardrobes, mattresses, and bedsteads streamed steadily past him. He rejoiced that his father must be having a very busy afternoon. Allah was good, and the fire was good—for *hammals*. Dispassionately he watched one, half-hidden by a huge wardrobe with a mirror-door, collide with another carrying a huge brass German bedstead. Both the *hammals* rolled over, and when they arose the mirror in the door was no more. Osman made a mental note of one of the expressions used. It was something that had never occurred to him, and he liked its piquant pointedness.

He used it almost at once —to an English Sister who blundered into him and his boot-box in her endeavour to avoid the distracted overladen refugees.

She smiled and begged his pardon.

Then she noticed that he was young and lithe and had beautiful dark eyes and long thin hands.

"Go and help!" she said, pointing in the direction of the fire. "Poor things! Go and help!"

He called her a Daughter of Shame, and went into details, laughing with pleasure at the thought of what she would look like if she understood. This was his one joke, which he never wearied of playing on these foolish foreigners.

The Sister passed on, saying to the officer who was with her—

"Oh, why don't the British take charge! *Look* at that poor woman over there with the baby!"

The woman had a child in one arm, and a sewing-machine, the treasure of treasures, dangling from the other. On her head she was balancing a bundle, and tied on her back was a small toilet looking-glass. Both she and the baby were crying noisily, and had evidently become separated

from the rest of her family and her household gods.

Almost crying with pity, the Sister snatched away the sewing-machine and signed to the officer to take the bundle. The woman roared more loudly than ever—and the Sister choked and laughed.

"Poor thing! She thinks we are robbing her!" she said, and took the woman's arm to show that they did not mean to leave her.

They moved on together, and Osman grinned at the sight of the officer weighed down by the bundle the woman had carried on her head as makeweight.

"Those British!" he muttered contemptuously, his sense of decency outraged by the sight of a man carrying more than a woman.

No wonder they always took their change short if an officer could do such a silly thing as that!

But the incident woke Osman up. His Turkish lethargy fled as a thought flashed into his mind. Loot . . . there must be lots of loot if the fire wasn't going to stop!

Leaving his box and his brushes in a shop doorway, he went up Venizelos Street, the centre of Salonica's commercial life—then a narrow highway with crowded shops on either side where one could purchase almost anything one could think of at four times its value. . . . A street of salesmen who stood upon the pavement and said, "Souveneer, Johnny?" to M.T. majors and such like august beings.

But this afternoon they were not importuning the passers-by. They were packing up. For some hours they had comforted themselves with the thought that the fire would never cross the famous Rue Ignatia of the Romans. It would be confined to the Ghetto where it had started. The other chap's house would be burned, but not theirs. But now they began to fear that their turn was coming.

Osman began to feel almost excited. Many curious things were happening all round him. Refugees carrying mattresses—another precious treasure that must be saved at all costs—would find them suddenly burst into flame on their backs. A spark flying in the Vardar wind had set them alight. Down went the mattress, dry and ready for burning like all else, and at once became the centre of another conflagration. Time and again he saw this happen, the wind catching up the smouldering flock and straw and cleverly dropping it upon some nicely sun-roasted roof that leapt into flame at once.

Struck by a sudden thought, he retraced his steps into the Rue Ignatia again and hurried to the shop of his father's landlord. The buildings at the back were already in flames, and with a light of great satisfaction in those fine dark eyes of his, he dashed in.

There was nobody there. The landlord had fled terror-stricken.

Hastily Osman looked round for something worth having.

The place had been left with all its stock, and just as he had decided on a piece of bright red silk that would make him a lovely sash, and a bundle of lace for his sister, something hurt him.

"'Ere! None of that! Idey! Goo on! Idey out of this!" said the voice of a British military policeman, punctuating his observations with his cane.

"Feenish, Johnny! Feenish, Johnny!" whined Osman.

He was annoyed. These British! If a man couldn't rob his own landlord, who could he rob? And why wasn't the fool looting himself instead of preventing others? Pah! These unbelievers were mad. . . . All this stuff would be burnt in a minute, and here this pig was saying "idey," which he fondly believed meant sling your hook, and hitting him with his cane instead of making himself rich!

"Feenish, Johnny! Feenish, Johnny!" he wailed again, and fled.

Evidently it was too late for looting. Those grabbing British again! They had taken charge . . . annexed the fire!

He wandered into the Ghetto, or what was left of it. The Jews in their ancient costumes were all in the streets—weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth. Dreadfully the women wrung their hands and cried their lamentations aloud; the children sobbed and ran hither and thither; the men raved and wept, now shaking their fists at the fire, now pleading humbly with the driver of an ox-cart to take their goods next. That was the great cry, the cry that rose even above the roar of the flames and the wind—"Mine next! Mine next!"

This terrified noisy crowd, afraid to stay and yet unable to tear themselves away from their treasures, made the eyes of Osman gleam. But not with pity. Their tears and their imprecations left him cold. His hatred of their race was something deep within his blood, something beyond reason or explanation. For the first time in his life he was seeing a Jew too frightened even to bargain—and he liked the sight.

Rival families were clustered round the drivers of those long, narrow, springless ox-carts, with wooden spikes for sides, which are the chief means of transport in the Balkans. With many gesticulations, amid a copious flow of tears, they were imploring, screeching, and outbidding each other. And the drivers were making the most of their opportunity,—trust a Greek for that. For less than a hundred and fifty drachmae—six pounds—they would not stir, and often they got ten.

Osman, listening and watching, without ever thinking of lending a helping hand, thrilled with excitement. Fortunes were being made before his eyes. Thousands were also being ruined, but that did not interest him.

If only his father had an ox-cart, instead of being a mere *hammal* . . . what a splendid

day this would have been for their house!

The thought brought his family back to mind. What had happened to them, he wondered? He shrugged his shoulders. Their home must be cinders by now. Well, Allah be praised, they had no furniture to lose, and if his sister had not saved his horse-blanket there would be trouble when next they met! This was a day when it was more comforting to be poor than to have great possessions.

An extra noisy altercation attracted his attention. An ox-cart had returned from a trip followed by a furious Jewess. It seemed that some two hundred yards away, in turning a corner, the cart had toppled over and the goods had been shot upon the pavement. The driver had refused to reload. He contended that he had fulfilled his bargain. The things had been moved. It was no concern of his that in half an hour they would be licked up by the flames and might just as well have stayed in the house. So far as he was concerned the transaction was finished, and he was now ready to move some more! The Jewess spluttered with indignation. She shook her fists, she screamed, and her whole body was bathed in perspiration. Pointedly she accused the Greek of having overturned the cart on purpose. Her husband, arriving belatedly because of the difficulty of tearing himself away from the pile of his treasures in the roadway, joined in with threats and objurgations, which tailed off into cringing and whining and the offer of more money. But the driver ignored them blandly as he struck another bargain; and his new customer angrily kicked them away.

Osman nodded appreciatively. Dog was eating dog—and he liked it. By Allah! this was a day!

From other noisy disputes going on around him he gathered that several more of these ox-cart drivers had tumbled to the game, and were playing the same heartless trick on their distracted victims.

He was so interested that he had forgotten to attend to the fire. In spite of the heat and the roar and the smoke, so terrible was their anxiety about their possessions that people kept forgetting to watch the fire—till with a sudden spurt it came upon them. Then there followed a wild stampede for safety and a final panic-stricken abandonment of all they had in the world.

There was a shower of sparks, so near and so startling that a pair of phlegmatic oxen incontinently bolted—and their driver, taken by surprise, was knocked down and run over before Osman's eyes. The disputing groups broke and fled. The other ox-carts were hurriedly driven off, as on each side of the street the houses burst into flame.

Neither Osman nor anybody else made the slightest effort to assist the man who had been knocked down. Either he would burn where he lay,

or else he would revive and stagger into safety for himself. That was as Allah willed. Osman ran after the oxen.

Thought with him was a subconscious process—a matter of instinct rather than of words or reasoning. He knew as he ran that his opportunity was upon him—and said something very crushing about the graves of the fathers of a man who blundered into him with a plush-covered chair and a spring-mattress.

Nobody took any notice of him. All were too absorbed in their own affairs. He caught and stopped the frightened oxen, turned them, and led them back to the fire-region again. But not in case their injured master might have recovered and be looking for them!

The sound of a motor-horn made him hop out of the way with a disgusted, angry snarl. Those British! See what they were doing now! They had brought their motor-lorries to help the enemy by moving his furniture—for nothing!

Pityingly he glanced Above. Almost he doubted the greatness and the goodness of Allah for the first time in his life. Did ever any one hear the like? Spoiling such an excellent market—moving the furniture of those who were technically their foes, free of charge!

He spat scornfully at the wheels of a 30-cwt. Daimler laden with bedding and women and children.

Was there *no* limit to the wickedness of these Unbelievers?

Shuddering, he watched a British soldier give an old woman a piece of chocolate to stop her crying! By the Beard of the Prophet, these people were truly mad!

"Idey! Idey bross!" said the stern voice of a British officer in his ear—meaning "get that damned thing out of the way, can't you?" (Truly it is a wonderful language!)

Osman passed on to another street. There were plenty to choose from, and the climax of his contempt had been reached. Allah! What next? Look! Behold!! See!!! A dozen British officers . . . officers! . . . loading half a dozen lorries with furniture! With their own hands—rushing in and out of the houses . . . working—officers!—like *hammals!*—with idle women standing by!

For nothing! Officers . . . working . . . shifting other people's furniture—for nothing!

He felt that he understood now how it was that his compatriots had hurled them from Gallipoli and slain half a million of them before they pushed the rest into the sea. No wonder the Germans were in Paris, and London was bombed to ashes!

But to business—to business!

He turned into a street inhabited by better-class Jews, with the top half already in the grip of the fire.

A greasy old man in a fur coat seized him by the arm: half a dozen women clung to the spikes at the side of the ox-cart he was taking care of; Shylock, *in propria persona*,

danced in front of him; and three wailing, buxom young Jewesses shrieked at him from the pavement.

He stood still.

The fire roared, the wind whistled, and everybody screeched at him and his ox-cart at once.

"Peace!" said Osman, the master of them all.

Only the fire and the wind disobeyed.

"One hundred drachmae!" said Osman, beginning modestly.

"I'll give one-fifty!" panted a fat Jewess, holding out the notes.

"Two hundred!" shrieked Shylock and the three girls together.

"Two-fifty!" shouted the man who still had him by the arm.

"It is a bargain!" said Osman—and the money was in his hand in greasy notes almost as soon as the words were out of his mouth.

"Three hundred!" wailed Shylock.

But he was too late. The other man with a frantic "Here!" had dragged Osman into his house, and the two of them, assisted by the wife and two daughters, began to load the vehicle in panic haste.

To move furniture is not the easiest of tasks at any time. But on a sweltering August evening, with a holocaust threatening to engulf one at any moment, and with a hot blast blowing smoke-clouds in gusts in one's face and sparks flying all around, it is wonderful what miracles of speed can be achieved.

True, a good deal of damage resulted from lack of method. To place a sewing-machine on the top of a pile of china is not good for the china. The legs of a table should not be allowed to come into contact with a mirrored overmantel, and pictures are better over than under a heavy brass bedstead.

Still . . . the great thing was to get the goods on, and on they were got, higgledy-piggledy, to a steady accompaniment of female wailing and manly vituperation, splintering wood and smashing glass.

The worse the cart was packed, the better Osman was pleased; the higher the load, the more easily that long narrow vehicle would overturn. He offered not the slightest objection when on top of the whole unsteady jumble a large heavy wardrobe was finally dumped.

The crude springless cart moved off over the uneven cobbles, accompanied by the terror-stricken family. Perilously lurched the badly-packed, top-heavy load, and Osman, with two hundred and fifty drachmae safe in the pocket of his baggy breeches, praised Allah in his heart.

A hundred and fifty yards or so they travelled, and then turned a corner too sharply. One wheel mounted the pavement: the load rocked, the Jewesses screamed, the Jew made a frantic effort to steady the wardrobe, and then the whole cart turned over, bury-

ing the Jew beneath his own furniture.

The women wrung their hands. But Osman shouted to them angrily, and, half stupefied with terror and anxiety, they assisted him to lift the cart into an upright position again.

Then, while they were getting the Jew out from under the wardrobe and a heap of miscellaneous articles piled on top of him—Osman made off.

He had earned his two hundred and fifty drachmae—ten pounds in half an hour!

There was no difficulty in obtaining a fresh load. Three hundred drachmae — fifteen pounds—changed hands, and a mixed assortment of the wares of a curio-dealer and his household gods were recklessly flung on to the ox-cart.

"Quick! quick!" panted the perspiring dealer.

"We shall be burned! We shall be burned!" shouted his wife monotonously.

The pair dashed in and out, the husband seeking to save his stock, the wife concerned solely for her furniture.

This time Osman stood at the head of his oxen.

The husband dumped an armful of antique brass-ware on to the heap; the wife added a collection of dirty cooking utensils. Valuable Persian carpets fought for a place with the bedding. Antique pottery mixed itself up with toilet sets —and a heavy tin trunk smashed the lot.

All the while the man and the woman quarrelled violently about what should be saved. In a passion the wife snatched off a bundle of ancient embroidery and threw it in the gutter, putting a heap of cheap framed Austrian lithographs in its place.

"These Jews! How badly they manage their women!" thought Osman, shocked.

"Enough! I go!" he said majestically, and the cart moved off.

Four minutes later it was overturned.

"Alas! You packed them so badly!" said Osman in response to their reproaches.

The man danced before him and threatened to pull his nose. The woman offered him another twenty-five drachmae.

He shook his head.

"Fifty!" said the man.

Osman shrugged his shoulders and was about to move on to his next victim when . . . those British again!

Pah! Why could not these dogs live and let live?

"Hullo! Upset the whole caboodle?" said a cheery voice. "Put your back into it, mother, and we'll soon have them on again!"

Impotently Osman had to stand by while, assisted by a couple of interfering Johnnies, the things were repacked.

"Shoved 'em on in too much of a 'urry, you did!" said the other one, wiping his heated brow. "They won't come off this time!"

Quite unaware of the fact that all their ancestors for fifty generations in arrear and seventy-five generations ahead had been fluently accursed, they passed on cheerily to lend

a helping hand somewhere else.

"Fine fellows, these British!" said the Jew dealer.

Osman grunted.

The goods were deposited on the Monastir road, another little pile among several hundred others, each guarded by a grief-stricken family. Women were rushing about calling frantically for missing children. In the place of the roar of the fire there rose a chorus of moans and sobs and wails that made even Osman feel uncomfortable.

He hurried back for another load.

He got three hundred drachmae again from a young, highly-scented, golden-haired lady dressed in pale blue silk and carrying a big fur cloak on her arm. For safety's sake she was wearing all her jewellery, and as she was filthily dirty, like every one else near the fire, the effect was distinctly bizarre.

A brocade-and-gilt settee, a set of gilt chairs, an ormolu console, a bundle of silk curtains, four fine rugs, an amazing bed, a washstand and a wardrobe, three "art" flower-pots and a big dress basket, were got upon the ex-cart with Osman's assistance, rendered on account of the scent. And then she wanted a grand piano added to the lot.

Osman explained—and the lady swore.

"But it is impossible!" he protested.

The lady swore some more.

"I cannot lift it! It would break the cart! Be reasonable, madame!" he pleaded.

"You must come back for it then!" she compromised.

"Yes, yes," he promised—and off they went.

At the first corner there was trouble—but not the trouble Osman expected. As the cart rose, the lady seized the spikes at the sides in her grimy bejewelled hands, and by sheer weight of body and quickness of mind prevented it from overturning.

"Limb of the Devil! Do that again and I will tear out thine eyes!" said the lady, suggestively working her long tapering fingers.

Osman sighed resignedly. Kismet! It was written. This load also must be taken the full journey!

However, he spilt the three following. Then, when even his baggy breeches were becoming small for all the notes he was stuffing into them, he carried six more loads without attempting any trickery.

Those British again! Night had long since fallen, though for once no Muezzin had summoned the Faithful to evening prayer. The tall white minarets stood in a sea of flame. Their metal tops were all melted, though, astonishing to relate, their masonry was unharmed. Father Time, afraid of getting his beard singed, had fled with the refugees. Even darkness could not come near that ghastly scene. For miles around earth and sky were brilliant with an eerie, glowing light. . . . And those

British were everywhere now —soldiers and sailors too, and the French as well. The military authorities had formally taken the business over. Rather late in the day a systematic effort was being made to cope with the fire. To Osman's disgust there were troops all over the place, and it was not safe to go in for any more hanky-pankying with so many sharp-eyed heavy-booted soldiers about.

The course of the fire, its freaks and its ravages, and how it finally stayed itself rather than was stayed, were matters of no interest to Osman, and therefore have no place in this story. He was concerned only with his Opportunity. His mind was not overcast by the noisy sorrows of its hundred thousand victims. Even their frantic, foolish efforts to save *something* of their possessions, preferably the most bulky or the most useless, moved him to wrath rather than tears. He was annoyed because they created so much confusion and crowding in the streets, and by getting in his way reduced the yield of his harvest.

[*I* can't help it. There he is. . . . And perhaps, when one comes to think of it, he isn't so very much worse than some of those butchers and bakers who were poor men in 1914, and now run Rolls-Royces, and thank God that nobody can call *them* Profiteers!]

At three in the morning, when the oxen were so weary that it was difficult to get them to move, and when he —a Turk—had been working steadily for seven hours on end, he took toll of his earnings.

Two thousand three hundred drachmae — ninety-two pounds!

He—Osman, the son of the *hammal* — had ninety-two pounds in his pocket!

Honestly come by! . . . Not looted — earned by the sweat of the oxen he had taken care of.

Somebody had had to look after them. They would have been burned to death, or have rushed into the sea, if it hadn't been for him!

As an honest man, he had no intention of keeping them. Their owner might not be dead, and might recognise them. . . . It is difficult to alter a brand. Food would be very scarce after this fire, and oxen had big appetites. . . . Having saved them from destruction, the only honest thing to do was to hand them over to the authorities, and let them keep them till their driver or his family claimed them.

Those Greeks, . . . those gendarmes — always so quick with a kick and a cuff for a poor Turkish lad — they would ask many questions. . . . By Allah! they might even search him. . . . Well, well, perhaps the most sensible thing to do would be simply to walk away. . . . Of course, somebody else might steal them; but what did that matter, so long

as he was an honest man himself?

Mark the influence of the Root of all Evil! Osman, the son of the *hammal*, possessed now of ninety-two pounds, had at once begun to think subjectively.

With a parting kick at the nearest of the two tired oxen, he walked away, leaving them supperless to whatever Fate might have in store for them.

Allah was Great—all-knowing, all-mighty, and all-bountiful!

II.

Hungry and tired, but more tired than hungry, so that the tiredness needed attention first, Osman wandered eastwards along the front, seeking a spot on which to lie down and rest. But every garden and shed, every open space, and every courtyard and alley, was crowded that night with human misery and odds and ends of furniture and drapery.

Systematically he searched among the sleepers-out for a corner into which he could squeeze. The night was hot and oppressive. Motor-cars and lorries were hurrying to and fro. Away back in the commercial centre the fire was still raging, though, thanks more to a change of wind than to good management, it was now under control. The air was heavy with heat and noise. But, worn out with sorrow and overstrain, the refugees slept, huddled in the queerest attitudes—men, women, and children, strangers and families, Mohammedans, Jews, and Christians all jumbled together.

Osman sighed with self-pity as he regarded them. He had ninety-two pounds in his breeches and nowhere to lay his head. There wasn't an inch for him anywhere. Hundreds of others were in the same plight, but that was nothing to do with him.

Disconsolately he wandered along, following the crowd, mainly women and children overloaded with babies and sewing-machines. There seemed to be purpose in their dragging gait, and his spirits rose as they reached a British camp at Kalamaria. The camp was lit up. It buzzed with talk and movement. Ahead of him he could see more women and children pouring in.

"'Ere—Idey!" said a sentry. "Not you, sonny!"

Osman almost wept. He took in the situation at once. All those tents and those long low wooden buildings had been given up by those fool-British to the women and children. Look at them streaming by in their hundreds—look at them having their parcels taken from them—being given blankets and hot tea and bread and jam. . . . While he—a man! footsore and starving, was to be driven away like a dog! With ninety-two pounds in his pocket, too!

It was the saddest thing

that had ever happened to him!

"Munji, munji, Johnny!" he wailed, at the same time placing his head upon his hand to show that he wanted a bed as well as something to eat—he, a poor refugee, rendered homeless by this terrible fire.

"Finish! Finish!" said Thomas Atkins sternly. "Idey! Look at them pore wimmen and kids! Idey—Idey bross—you're blocking the way!"

Osman turned his back on the ununderstandable race. Doubtless Allah in his wisdom knew why such a people cumbered the earth, but it was beyond him. So he wandered wearily to the open ground behind, and cast himself down and slept.

He woke to glorious sunshine, with blue sea in the distance. Salonica was still smoking. His state was filthy. But the idea of washing off some of the fire-grime in the sea gleaming in front of him never entered his head. He set off at once in search of food.

A few inquiries soon informed him of the lie of the land. The British and the French had already joined forces with the municipality to feed and house the refugees. So, with ninety-two pounds in his pocket, he joined the long queue waiting at one of the appointed places for a free dole of bread. Each religion was attending to its own flock.

Why not? Why buy what one could get for nothing by a few lies and a little patience?

Ravenously and not very prettily he devoured his portion in a mixed company engaged on the same task. In the midst of this absorbing occupation he heard a sharp click, and looked up.

A French officer had "snapped" the scene.

Osman glared at the camera and took another bite, at the same time pungently criticising the free coffee with which he had been supplied. It was only the Faithful who put enough sugar in coffee!

A bearded Turk beside him informed him solemnly that the fire had been deliberately started by the French and the British with the connivance of the Venizelists. The Allies were afraid of the Germans. Having beaten them in the West, the Kaiser was coming to help the Bulgarians to take Salonica; and so, to make it not worth William's while, and to avoid being kicked out of Salonica as the Turks had kicked them out of Gallipoli, they had burned the place down to save their faces. It was all as clear as day. That was why they were feeding them, of course, because they had done it on purpose.

Osman agreed, and told of the folly that gave even *old* women food and a bed last night and sent him empty away. This the bearded Turk regarded as direct confirmation of the correctness of his theory.

Growing weary of politics, and having finished his meal, Osman wandered down to the front. Casually he glanced at the smouldering ruins and the

amazing muddle of twisted iron that marked the sites of the Hotel Splendide, the Hotel Continental, and Floca's, the chief of Salonica's cafés. Then he stared with sudden interest.

Almost in the heart of the fire one building had escaped the flames — a big new emporium, out of bounds to all Allied troops because it was an enemy concern. There it stood—a marble-faced, modern fire-proof building, imposingly solid and splendid — without even its iron shutters damaged . . . while all around it lay ruin and desolation.

"Allah is great!" murmured Osman. "His purpose is plain. . . . The Germans will win this war!"

The thing was an omen—unquestionable and convincing. . . .

Sneeringly he glanced at a group of French and British officers snapshotting the miracle.

"These Dogs — and their Devil-boxes!" he muttered, hurrying out of range of the cameras.

A moment he paused near the big red Dennis fire-engine of the British, which was still throwing its powerful stream on the smoking debris. Then he sought a quiet place, noticing as he hurried on that an English Sister was "snapping" the firemen at their work.

He realised as he sank down in the shade that ever since he had awakened something had been troubling him. There was something on his mind, something claiming his attention.

Not his father. The *hammal*, doubtless, had carried many burdens yesterday, and would find many more to carry today. Big fires were good for *hammals*.

Not the man whose oxen he had taken care of, or the oxen themselves. Allah was attending to them.

Not his mother and sister. If they had not had the sense to get one of the free tents and some of the free food, they were unworthy of his relationship.

Not his home—swallowed up with the rest. Not even his one possession, the French horse-blanket. Allah be praised! if his mother and sister had been foolish enough to let that be burnt, the French had plenty more.

No — none of these things. . . . His trouble was that ninety-two pounds!

It was a tremendous sum of money.

Two thousand three hundred drachmae.

Even at War prices he could buy a wife or two, a suit of real clothes, a silver cigarette-holder, a bellyful of sweetmeats, a walking-stick with a picture at the top and a tassel on the handle, a pair of patent-leather boots (if any had been left from the fire). . . . Oh! what was there that he had ever hankered for that he could not buy for himself to-day?

And yet . . . apart from the question of what remained to be bought after the fire—what

was there that he really desired to buy?

Restlesaly he rolled a cigarette in those long fingers of his, and across those "beautiful dark eyes" the Sister had admired there flitted a shadow of bewilderment.

What did it mean? What was wrong?

He wanted none of these things.

With ninety-two pounds in his pockets, with all he had ever dreamed of within his reach, he desired . . . nothing!

It was too big a sum to be spent like that. It was a sum so big that he was positively afraid to break into it.

A *hammal* passed, bent almost double under the weight of a bale of salvaged merchandise, . . . his father.

Osman lay low, and gave no sign of recognition. He had no father . . . with ninety-two pounds in his pocket.

The morning passed, and by the afternoon he had bought only a slice of melon—paid for with coppers earned before the fire. The transaction had involved much abuse. The vendor had demanded twenty leptae—because of the fire. Yesterday a slice of melon had been ten leptae—a penny. Osman had expressed himself so eloquently on the subject of such shameless profiteering that he had got his slice for fifteen leptae—three halfpence . . . with ninety-two pounds hidden in his baggy breeches.

During the afternoon he dropped off to sleep, and dreamed that he was a rich man with a motor-car. In the dream his sister Fatima stopped him and asked for alms, but he drove over her; and a military policeman (British) said "Idey!" and smote him with a cane where his money was not. And then he woke up, unmoved by his sister's fate, but relieved to find no military policeman there. That part of the dream had been so real.

He stretched himself and rose. He knew now what was the matter with him. He didn't want a silver cigarette-holder, or a bellyful of sweetmeats, or anything petty like that. He wanted to be rich and respected; wanted a motor-car—a real Ford, such as he had possessed in his dream. He wanted to be great—powerful, so that *hammals* like his father would cringe at his feet . . . if it wasn't all too much trouble.

That two thousand three hundred drachmae had awakened within him—the bootblack, the *hammal's* son—the curse that the Cardinal charged Cromwell to fling away—Ambition.

He wanted to *sow* those drachmae, not spend them—sow them and reap a quick big harvest.

Click!

More officers were snapshotting the ruins.

Osman rolled another cigarette, and signed to a brigadier-general, seeing the sights, that he desired a light from the brigadier's cigarette, in ac-

cordance with the custom of the country.

Amazed and amused, the Great One complied.

"Merci, Johnny!" said Osman politely, and resumed his meditations.

Opportunity had come to him yesterday, and now, vaguely glimmering in the distance, he had an irritated feeling that it was beckoning to him again.

It was connected in some way with cameras. All day he had seemed to hear nothing but the click of cameras. The Allies were mad on cameras. French and British, officers and nurses, and even ordinary soldiers—they all had cameras, and they were all taking fire photographs. Never before had he heard so many shutters click.

An Australian Nursing Sister imperiously signed to him to get out of the way. She didn't want him in the "snap" she meant to send to Sydney (where the harbour is) of the havoc wrought by the Salonica fire. . . .

He was so interested in the thought that he was chasing in his brain, the vision he was trying to grasp, that he moved without making any remarks about her morals in Turkish.

Yes. . . . These Unbelievers were all photographing to-day — taking the ruins — the refugees—anything and everything connected with the fire. More would be doing the same to-morrow. It seemed that the men couldn't fight and the women couldn't nurse without cameras. . . . Allah be praised! It was clear that He — All-wise and All-bountiful — had made such soldiers simply to be mopped up by the Faithful. . . . Warriors who carried cameras—no wonder they had run screaming from the Peninsula!

It was permitted in their army here, but not in France. Osman had learned that in Venizelos Street, listening to a conversation between two dealers. Practically all the shops that sold photographic materials were in Venizelos Street—and Venizelos Street was now ashes and bent iron-work.

He was getting hotter and hotter in every sense. With a graceful gesture he flung the perspiration from his forehead.

Two more cameras clicked excitedly.

They would soon use up all their films. Then they would want more. Officers and sisters and ordinary soldiers — they would all want films. . . . And the shops were burnt down. . . . They would pay anything — anything! — for these Unbelievers could never wait—they had no patience. . . . Allah had made them so in order that the Faithful might profit.

He had it! Ah! he had it at last. Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, had granted him Light!

See! Truly the Finger of Allah or his Prophet was pointing! Behold—there—coming towards him, one of the dealers from Venizelos Street, a man whose boots he had cleaned time and again.

Respectfully Osman greeted the downcast merchant, and, immersed in his sorrows, the dealer talked — to a shoe-shiner.

Yes — he was ruined. All had gone.

Start again? Of course he wasn't thinking of starting again — not for months yet. His shop would have to be rebuilt first. And that depended on many things — whether the Allies would permit material to be sent, and when the Insurance Companies —all Allied concerns—would pay up. There were rumours — horrible rumours. . . . The fire was said to be of enemy origin, an Act of War, . . . and if so . . . The Greek shuddered, quite unable to finish such a dreadful sentence.

Where would he get his new stock from? Osman inquired, looking away.

Alexandria, of course — or Malta. There were wholesale depots at each of those places. From both perhaps.

Send the money? Of course he would send the money when he had it to send. . . . There was no credit in this accursed War. Because of the submarines one had to send cheques in duplicate.

What was a cheque?

Oh . . . a cheque, of course.

But what was the use of talking? There would be no business for months and months. Salonica—everybody was ruined. . . . It all depended on the Insurance Companies. He was a Venizelist. They were all Venizelists since the fire. These Insurance Companies were Allied concerns.

With a gesture of despair the dejected dealer passed on.

Osman flicked some more perspiration from his forehead.

He had learned something, but the mysteries among which his mind was moving appalled him. Allah grant him understanding! What was this thing—this cheque?

All else was easy. He knew the name of these foreign merchants who made the cameras and the films—who did not? He knew now their address. . . . Alexandria and Malta. But he had no cheques to send them—only notes. . . .

From whom could he buy a cheque? To whom dare he go and explain his difficulty and find out what a cheque was?

Nobody. . . . He would only be robbed.

Dismay seized him. He was baffled. That real Ford, that high position, those great riches would never be his . . . because he had no cheques, and knew not what they were!

"Allah have pity!" he groaned.

But the leaven of ambition was fermenting in his baggy breeches. He could feel that thick bundle of notes, mostly twenty-fives, each time he moved.

Desperation seized him. Decision gripped him—a Turk! Something outside of himself made up his mind, cut through the barbed-wire entanglement of his ignorance.

"Money is money. . . . I

will send the notes!" he muttered firmly. "When they see my money they will not be able to refuse to send the goods!"

The sight of the cash is always the bargainer's trump card in the Balkans. You talk for an hour: then you dangle your final offer before the vendor's eyes.

It was settled! By the medium of the post the money should be dangled before the Company's eyes!

Bitterly, for the first time, Osman cursed the U-boats. Then, strangely pale, and for once without even a glance for the women, covered or uncovered, he walked slowly through the heat towards the outskirts of the town. Pausing at a dingy shop well away from the region of the fire, he purchased pen, ink, notepaper and envelopes, and then walked on again into the hills.

Supposing the men who opened his letters stole the money? And swore that the letters had never reached them?

Supposing the post office stole it?

Or the ship's captain?

These thoughts made him perspire again.

With a groan he was about to tear the notes out of the envelopes and stuff them back in his pockets, when—click! went a camera!

Two nurses, rambling in the hills during their weekly afternoon off, after having inspected the fire, had snapshotted the "young Turkish shepherd," who looked so sweet and picturesque, watching his distant flock with such big sad eyes.

How were they to know that the mixed flock of sheep and goats grazing half a mile away belonged to a Spanish Jew, and were in charge of a Macedonian youth fast asleep under the shade of a tree?

"Kismet! It is written!" said Osman.

That click settled it once and for all. Evidently Allah willed that the letters should go. Who could doubt it?

They went — unregistered because he knew not of such things. And what is more—they both arrived.

Apparently the sight of the money was, as he had calculated, too much for the Company. Three weeks later the goods came to hand from Alexandria, and those from Malta followed within another week.

During that three weeks Osman had lived at his ease, augmenting the free rations of a penniless refugee from the three hundred drachmae he still had in hand. He cleaned no shoes. His box had been burned in the fire. Instead, he sought the company of photographic dealers, and by sympathy and humility picked up considerable information about their trade. His father he had continued to avoid, and he knew not whether his mother and sister were alive or dead.

Mentally he had lived during this period in a state of suspended animation rather than anxiety. Where a Briton would have alternated daily

between expectation of success and disaster, Osman, being a Turk, shrugged his shoulders and said "Kismet."

The arrival of the first packing-case galvanised him into activity. There was a little difficulty about delivery, but twenty-five drachmae to a port official smoothed that away.

He engaged a *hammal* to carry it to a shed he had rented with three other "merchants" as a home and warehouse combined.

As a result of the fire Salonica had become a city of street hawkers. Pending the erection of new buildings, such goods as had been saved from the flames were now exposed on the pavements or hung upon the railings. Shop-keeping had become very simple, and much more profitable than ever before for those lucky enough to have anything to sell.

The goods offered for sale were mostly tin-ware, drapery, particularly gaudy handkerchiefs and table centres of the "souvenir" variety, and haberdashery. Boot-laces were one-twenty—a shilling—a pair! The photographic dealers were still out of business. The few films saved here and there had long ago been snapped up. All, in short, was ripe for Osman's enterprise.

The packing-case was his stall. He covered it with a bright yellow printed table-cloth of astounding pattern and vividity, and arranged on it a selection of the cheap cameras, and samples of the various sizes of films that had been sent to him.

He loved his new profession from the first. It was even less arduous than boot-shining! One just lolled there and looked at the women, . . . and took money, . . . and learned English.

"Have you any vest-pocket films?" asked a Nursing Sister.

"Ves' pock'? Yes!" answered the linguist.

"How much? Combeeong?"

Both hands were raised with all the fingers spread out, including the thumbs.

"Ten drachmae! But that is very dear!"

"Ten!" said Osman, learning the word.

"Troh share! Too much!" said the Sister bilingually.

"Ten drachmae!" replied the Camera King.

And the Sister paid. There was nothing else to be done, for the passion for snapshots in a city of so many types and interests was strong upon her.

"Numbare ther-ee? Yes, Johnny!" This to a British officer.

Both hands went up, and then the right hand followed alone.

"Fifteen!" cried the officer indignantly. "Bosh!"

"Fifteen, Johnny!" said Osman, learning another word. "Finish, Johnny?"

"No! I'll try somewhere else!"

He stalked off—and came back in half an hour and paid fifteen drachmae for an article that should have been two and a half. There *was* nowhere

else. A camera without films in so tempting a place was an unthinkable proposition. If the films had not been there, one could have gone without. But to see them there . . . waiting in the sunshine . . . it was only a very strong-minded or a very poor man who could walk away from Osman's stall.

His friends the dealers came and cursed him. But what did that matter? By the time the first consignment had been exhausted, the second had arrived. He did not order a third. Allah was great and had granted him Understanding!

Films would come pouring in. Seeing his success, all the others would hurry to minister to this weakness of the Allies. The bottom would be knocked out of the market.

The main principles of successful commerce, you perceive, are not so very abstruse. Even a Turkish boot-black can deduce them for himself, once Fate has started him on the right road. The great thing is that there must be no manual labour attached. Work that did itself was the kind of work that Osman could do very well.

One day when his stock was almost exhausted his sister Fatima appeared before the stall, stared, and recognised him.

"You were not killed then," she said stolidly.

"Nor you?" he answered.

She shook her head — a leggy child, almost a woman, very dirty, but not without good looks that would soon be veiled from the sight of men.

"Our father made much money in the fire," she announced. "We have two beds now. He forgot the face of the man who gave them to him to carry."

"They will be taken away!" said Osman scornfully. "All that was stolen must be given back. It is written on the papers on the walls!"

Fatima fidgeted with her feet on the pavement.

"My box was burned," said her brother.

"Ah! So was your blanket and my cloak."

"I am very poor. . . . See what I have to do for a bare living!" he whined. "Stay here all day and take money for my master!"

"Who is your master?" she inquired.

"A Jew . . . a hard man," he lied.

"It is as Allah wills," said Fatima.

"He is All-wise and All-bountiful!" replied her brother. "But stand back while I speak with this Unbeliever!"

By the time he had served his customer Fatima had disappeared.

"To-morrow my father will come!" thought Osman. "He will make me go back. . . . He will beat me and empty my pockets, . . . if I am still here!"

But he did not intend to be there. There was only one camera left and a few odd films. These he would sell cheap that very day before the Muezzin

called the Faithful to evening prayer. . . .

And after that . . . what Allah willed!

Packed about his person in hundred drachmae notes was a sum of four hundred and fifty pounds—eleven thousand two hundred and fifty drachmae! This was what he had made of his ninety-two pounds—four hundred and fifty!

He was rich. . . . The world lay at his feet. . . . With four hundred and fifty pounds one could make contracts with the Armies! One could be a Contractor—the easiest and most profitable occupation of all!

He had learned much since the day of the fire. It was easy for the Faithful to make money. One offered to supply vegetables — potatoes, tomatoes, cabbages — or cheese or wood—or wine (to the French). Always they were buying, buying, buying . . . at prices that made one's mouth water. . . .

One signed a paper—one deposited a hundred pounds to show one was a man of substance. Then one paid another two thousand five hundred drachmae to the man who was really to supply the goods to complete the bargain. After that the money came of itself. . . . These Unbelievers paid as regularly as the Call to Prayer, and the difference between their cheque (Yes, he knew what a cheque was now, Allah be praised!) — the difference between their cheque and the money one paid to the man who did all the work and supplied the goods was the contractor's profit.

A splendid occupation—better than blacking shoes, better even than keeping a stall. . . .

He rolled a cigarette and placed it in a long carved silver holder.

"Finish, Johnny!" he said haughtily to a British officer who wanted some vest-pocket films.

Allah was great and all was well. His feet were now firmly planted on the ladder of wealth that led to a real Ford and two wives. He did not want more than two—to begin with. . . .

COURTS-MARTIAL IN FRANCE.

FROM time to time during the war an outcry has been raised against the injustice which, it is asserted, has been inflicted by military tribunals at the front upon persons who have been brought within their jurisdiction. Sometimes the complaint has been directed against the system itself, sometimes against the methods adopted in carrying it out. And now that a committee of inquiry has been set up by the War Office to deal with the question, and the existing Army—composed almost entirely of "civilian helpers"—is to a large extent disbanded, the whole system under which justice is administered in the Army will be subjected to further and rigorous scrutiny.

Now, in these days of universal suffrage, in which thinking has become unpopular and rudeness nationalised, criticism is seldom found to be either ingenuous or instructed; and, as in the turmoil of reconstruction many an institution will be marked for felling which needs only lopping and pruning, a description of how the court-martial system in France has worked in practice may not be without value and interest.

I shall never forget my feelings when I first arrived at Army Headquarters to take up duty as a court-martial officer. I had had no leave for nearly eleven months, and our battery had been continuously in action; the never-ceasing gun fire was beginning to affect my hearing, and it had become imperative that I should rest my ears for a time. I had been threatened with a rest hospital by the sea, but I was lucky enough to escape with the lesser banishment which was involved in attachment to H.Q. for a few months, until I had recovered sufficiently to return to regimental duty in the line.

And so, with my gear and servant, I was whirled off to the Army. What an amazing change it was! Instead of living in the mud of the Ypres salient under a sheet of corrugated iron or a tarpaulin, with a prospect of being blown to smithereens at any moment, I found that my quarters were a comfortable wooden hut in the beautiful grounds of a luxurious chateau. No mud or discomfort was allowed within the sacred precincts which these "who sit behind and think for you" were pleased for the moment to occupy. Double rows of duck-boards, usually quite unobtainable in the front areas, enabled the H.Q. staff to pass in comfort from their offices or billets to and from the mess, with its electric lights and warm fire, where the only thing one could be said to lack was the sweet companionship of the fairer sex. And, to make assurance doubly sure, I found a body of stalwarts, the "Area Em-

ployment Company" — jocularly termed the "Area Enjoyment Company"—whose sole business in life it was, with hammer and pick and shovel, to keep the Olympians safe, and free from the discomforts and realities of war.

For two or three nights I found the silence too oppressive for sleep, and I lay awake listening to the drip of the dank leaves of the trees overhead, and wondering at my good fortune in finding this genial habitation far from the madding Boche.

Nevertheless, even at Army H.Q. some work must occasionally be done, and for a week or two I was sent out to attend courts-martial as a "learner" in company with an expert court-martial officer. All that I need say about my time as a "learner" is that these courts-martial were invariably held well behind the line; that I lunched with a different unit each day; and that, as I was only detailed to listen to what went on, I found it both a pleasant and an interesting experience.

Some time before I reached Army H.Q., the services of C.M.O.'s had become so much in request that it had been decided that a C.M.O. should be allotted to each Army Corps, and, while remaining an Army officer, should live at Corps H.Q. and attend courts-martial held in its area. And so it was not long before I was attached as C.M.O. to a Corps in the line; and I am glad to say that, as all the three Corps to which I was at different times attached during the next few months were invariably "in the line," I was able to carry on my work under the most interesting, and sometimes even thrilling surroundings.

But what is a C.M.O., and why is he appointed? Well, a C.M.O. is an officer with legal training,—almost invariably a practising barrister,— who is appointed as Judge Advocate to keep a G.C.M. straight on points of law and procedure, and in Field General Courts-Martial combines with the duties of Judge Advocate the responsibility of a sitting and voting member of the tribunal.

Few people, I think, appreciate the importance or the difficulties of his position. He is not, as a general rule, *de jure* president of the Court, and yet, in practice, his view dominates the tribunal, and it is his decision which determines both the finding and any sentence that may be awarded. It is easy to imagine under these circumstances how necessary it is for him to exercise discretion, and the heavy weight of responsibility which he bears in the serious cases which come up for trial. To add to his difficulties, the C.M.O., in his official capacity, is usually not a *persona grata* with the Corps Staff, and their dislike of the "legal expert" is not diminished by the fact that the appointment of trained lawyers as C.M.O.'s was, I understand, necessitated to prevent mistakes being made by military tribunals in their efforts to administer justice.

And yet the position of a C.M.O. to a Corps is, I think, one of the most delightful jobs in the Army. As an Army officer attached to a Corps, he receives respect and consideration as belonging to a higher formation, and as a specialist there is no one to supervise his work; with the happy result that, so long as he attends his courts, the C.M.O. is his own master in a sense seldom realisable in the service.

Now, the C.M.O. has to be present at as many courts-martial held in the Corps area as he finds practicable. Some C.M.O.'s used to select definite places where they sat on specified days, but the system I adopted was, I think, a more practical one; certainly it gave me much more interesting experiences. I used to allot to each Division, the Corps troops, and the Artillery, one day a week in which I was ready to attend courts-martial held at any place chosen by the convening authority; with the result that I covered in my "circuit" the whole ambit of the Corps area; became acquainted with the work and personnel of every sort of military unit, and enjoyed the hospitality, on one day of a division, on another of a battery, or a supply column, or an infantry brigade, often of battalions in support or reserve, and sometimes of battalions in the actual fighting line.

In the morning I used to drive or ride as near as I could to the place selected for the court-martial, and on arrival at the camp, or nissen hut, or dug-out, I found sometimes as many as a hundred people awaiting me—accused, escort, witnesses, and the other members of the Court. I am speaking, of course, of F.G.C.M. A general court-martial is a much more formal affair, about which I will say something in a moment. A table with a blanket over it, and some upturned sugar boxes, usually did service for the court equipment; and, as I entered, I invariably received what is perhaps the best thing that can come one's way—a genuine welcome. The President—as a rule a lieutenant-colonel or major, sometimes a captain—would say, "Ah! here you are! The C.M.O. aren't you? I *am* glad to see you. What do *you* do?" "I do everything there is to do, except, I hope, get at cross purposes with you, sir." "By Jove, that is splendid! Here, take this old chair—you will find it more comfortable for writing." For, strange to say, the soldier has a very wholesome fear of courts-martial, and, especially in the case of a regular officer, is profoundly relieved when the weight of responsibility for the course of the trial is taken off his shoulders.

And here I should like to say something of the source of this trepidation, which militates so greatly against the capacity of a soldier to administer justice. It arises, so far as I have been able to learn, in this way. After a young officer has received

a commission in the regular Army he is detailed to attend a number of courts-martial for instruction, and is expected to learn the procedure of a court of justice, and to make himself familiar with the principles of military law. He is afterwards himself appointed a member of a court-martial.

In nine cases out of ten he is found to be quite unfitted to discharge the duty for which he has been detailed. His opinion as to whether the accused is guilty or not has by military law to be taken first, and, although the members of the tribunal sit both as judges and jury, I have found that in the great majority of cases the President wishes the members to answer the question of "guilty or not guilty," and later of the sentence, without any previous discussion whatever as to what the right answer should be. What chance has a young officer, or the President for that matter (himself a soldier without legal training), of giving an opinion deserving of any weight? I remember once laying down that the accused might be sentenced to field punishment up to ninety days, or to imprisonment for not more than two years. "What do you say?" said the President to the junior member. "Oh! two years imprisonment with hard labour." I felt I was bound to point out that the offence was a trivial one. "Oh! I see," said the subaltern; "then I say seven days F.P. No. 1."

Again, on the question of guilt, many soldier members do not come into court with a completely independent mind. At the very outset one finds that the court is convened by a senior officer, usually a general, who by the form of the convening order states that "whereas it appears to me . . . that the persons named in the annexed schedule . . . *have committed the offences in the said schedule mentioned.*" Now it is perfectly true that, by military law, no one is allowed to influence the opinion of the members of a court-martial, and that no comment is to be made on an acquittal. But there are more ways than one of killing a sheep, and the fact that the convening officer has already formally expressed his view that the accused is guilty, coupled with the fact that every finding of guilty and sentence has to be confirmed, probably by the convening officer himself, who is often the C.O. of the formation to which the members of the court-martial belong, cannot be without influence on the tribunal. Again and again after an acquittal I have heard a member say, "we shall get into hot water for this." How often have officers, whose findings or sentences have not been approved by senior officers (not themselves present, and who did not hear or see the witnesses), been detailed to sit for a time on every available court-martial for instruction? I wonder! Have not lists of suitable sentences for offences been compiled and issued by higher formations for "the

guidance" of members of courts-martial? Is it prudent to disregard such intimations? It is not unreasonable that, placed as they are, soldiers should find it difficult to acquire the independence of judgment so essential to the administration of justice, and should be desperately anxious that all should "go well."

And is it, after all, such an easy task to balance the weight of evidence, or to draw the right inference from facts? Is it true that, while a physician must undergo years of training before he can pretend to diagnose disease, any one is capable of forming an unbiassed judgment upon evidence without experience, and by the light of nature? Must not a person be trained to be fair in judicial matters? "We agree," regular officers have said to me, "that C.M.O.'s are useful, because there are not enough regular officers to sit on courts-martial." Well, I have found, and I have already indicated a reason for it, that of all soldiers the regular officer is the least endowed with the judicial sense. And so it happens that the C.M.O. is assured of a warm welcome, and, if he is tactful, of a pliant tribunal also.

I wish I could portray the scene as the drama unfolds. The dim light of a few sputtering candles throwing into relief the forms of the accused and his escort; the tired and drawn faces of the witnesses under their tin helmets; and the accused himself, apparently taking only a languid interest in the evidence as it accumulates against him. Looking back now, with the dangers and chances of the battlefield already receding into the mist of things that are past, one of the strangest features of the forward area was the atmosphere of listlessness with respect to everything except one's physical needs, which pervaded the soldier's life and coloured every scene. There life and death were viewed in a truer prospective. After all, did it matter so very much? George was killed yesterday; poor old Harry was hit by a splinter just before we started for the court; and by a hundred well-known signs we are made aware of the "show" which will soon be coming off. And so, a stranger to war as it was waged in France and Flanders, coming upon such a scene, would scarcely believe that in these matter-of-fact proceedings issues of life and death were being tried.

One thing I never omitted to do. I determined that the accused should always fully understand what he was "up against"; and, by putting the poor fellow so far as possible at his ease, I was enabled more than once to save his life. I remember on one occasion a private in the Labour Corps being tried for desertion—a capital offence. It was a simple case, and apparently a bad one. He had been working with his company in the forward area; they had been badly shelled, and had scattered for a short time. On resuming work the accused

was found to have disappeared. Search was made, but he could not be found; and four days later he was arrested forty miles behind the line. He did not wish to have the witnesses cross-examined, or to dispute the facts, but stood stolidly before us, and would ask no questions. However, I was not satisfied, and when the prosecution was closed, I urged him to tell us why it was he had gone away. For a time he remained silent; but at length, after I had repeatedly invited him to tell us anything which would enable us to help him, his whole manner suddenly changed; he became alert, drew himself up, and speaking very fast, said: "Well, sir, I was just about 'fed up' with the R.E. Nothing I did would satisfy the corporal, and so I thought I had better 'op it, etc., etc." He was obviously speaking the truth, and I afterwards discovered that he had asked to be allowed to go back to duty with his battalion in the line! One shudders to think what might have happened if he had been tried by a tribunal lacking experience of legal proceedings!

The value of having on a tribunal a member trained to test evidence is well illustrated in cases where an old soldier —say a C.Q.M.S.—is charged with drunkenness. In nine cases out of ten, if he intends to put up a defence, he will call a long string of witnesses to prove that he was not drunk. Suppose the R.S.M. and a C.S.M. are called for the prosecution, and accused produces for the defence seven junior N.C.O.'s and privates, what is the Court to do? Well, I have found that the Court usually leans to one of two courses. Either it says, "Oh! we must support the R.S.M. or there is an end of discipline," or it says, "Well, you see there are two witnesses on one side and seven on the other, we must find him not guilty." In other words, "they count heads." As a matter of fact, in most cases the R.S.M. may safely be believed; but what I almost invariably found was that the evidence for the defence, after cross-examination, did not really amount to very much; because the witnesses would not state that the accused was not drunk at the time suggested by the prosecution, but would only say that some little time before or after he appeared to be normal. The art of cross-examination, however, like the art of fighting a rear-guard action, is not a matter of intuition, and can be acquired only after a long period of training and experience. And, in such cases as these, it is by skilful sifting of the evidence alone that it is possible to find out where the truth lies.

The procedure at a F.G.C.M. is very simple, and is similar to that of a trial at Assizes or Quarter Sessions. The prosecutor is usually the adjutant of the battalion to which the accused belongs. He, as a rule, takes very little part in the proceedings, except to marshal the witnesses, and

after conviction, to speak, if possible, in favour of the accused. But the value of his presence cannot be overrated, for the adjutant knows the accused's history, and can often assist the Court in finding some witness to prove that the accused had previously done some gallant act. The importance of such evidence will be appreciated when I say that, after a conviction on a capital charge (and I must have tried over 300 such charges), no Court of which I was a member ever sentenced the accused to death if he had done a single gallant act, or had been proved to be a brave man under fire. It may be interesting here to recall the curious rule of military law, that, after conviction, the only evidence of character which may be received (other than evidence of the accused's good character), is his conduct sheet. This, however, at the front, was often quite worthless, for regimental records were not seldom destroyed, and the conduct sheet was only a temporary one; and, in any case, a man does not necessarily possess a good character merely by having escaped conviction. This is an anomaly which should be done away with, and the Court in future should be allowed to know, after conviction, the true character of the accused. I remember an amusing incident *apropos* of this. I once asked a soldier who had been convicted of a serious offence, if he wished to call any one to give him a good character. "No, thank you, sir; the last time I was at a court-martial I came before you, and I am quite ready to leave myself in your hands." He was then marched out, and on looking at his conduct sheet I found that he was quite right,—but that on that occasion he had been sentenced to death!

As regards the defence, every person to be tried by court-martial is entitled to choose any officer he wishes to defend him; and it is a glowing testimony to the good terms upon which regimental officers live with their men, that in nearly every case the accused selects his company or platoon commander. In cases in which the death penalty is likely to be imposed, the accused, if possible, is to be defended by an officer who had legal training before the war. The value of being defended by one's own company commander, however, lies not so much in his power of advocacy, as in his desire to do all he can to save the honour of the battalion or battery; and, many a time, the obvious and genuine desire of the accused's friend to keep the prisoner in the battalion has saved him in his hour of peril. Every latitude is given to the accused and his friend; every step is taken to procure the attendance of any witness or document which the accused thinks may in any way help him; and the anxiety that everything possible should be done to help the accused in

his defence is, I think, the most striking and admirable feature of a court-martial.

Sometimes, but all too rarely, the accused was defended by a trained professional advocate,—the most successful defender whom I came across being Captain Healy, the nephew of Tim Healy, K.C. But, whether it is an advantage to be defended by counsel at a court-martial is, however, an open question. The military members of the Court, not being very sure of their ground, are apt to regard him and his ways with undue suspicion, just as I have known juries shy of accepting the advances of counsel "too clever by half," and swallowing whole the simple suggestions of "just a plain man like ourselves," such as the present Lord Justice Duke when he was at the Bar. *Summa ars est celare artem.* On the other hand, I have known instances of the Court being entirely carried away by the wiles of counsel. I remember on one occasion,—and if the counsel concerned reads this article he will remember it too,—an officer being tried for being drunk in the mess. The C.O., the adjutant, I think, and other witnesses, were called for the prosecution; while for the defence several officers gave evidence to rebut the charge. Most, if not all of these officers, however, were themselves alleged to have been drinking in the mess with the accused. The issue hung in the balance. "I now propose to call the padre," said counsel. A R.C. padre was then duly sworn, and stated that he had "stood and been stood" drinks, and that, when he left, *so far as he remembered*, the accused was perfectly sober! Subsequently, I had occasion to point out,—as the padre's evidence was much relied on,—that the padre appeared to be in no better position than the other officers; they were all drinking together. "Oh! as to that," said counsel, "if the padre had stated that he had been for so long the spiritual adviser to this battalion, and yet had refused to touch a drop of whisky, the Court would not have believed another word that he said. . . ." The accused was acquitted!

I should like here to say a few words about general courts-martial. A G.C.M. is a cumbrous and archaic proceeding, born of distrust out of red tape. It differs from other forms of trial mainly in this, that those who invented it, thinking that soldiers would probably go wrong (if left to their own devices) when attempting to administer justice, compiled a printed form of proceedings complete with questions, and with spaces for the answers down to the smallest detail. This form had, at all costs, to be followed. It was supposed to be "fool-proof"; not even a military tribunal could go wrong, provided it followed the form. Failure to comply with the details of the form, however, was a matter for adverse comment, and might result in invalidating the proceedings altogether. To illustrate the length to which

"red tape" can go, a famous Division, which I knew well, after three years of war, was blessed with a new A.A. and Q.M.G., who had, I believe, spent the earlier part of the war on the staff in England, and had now come to France for the first time. I was invited one day to go over to dine with the Division, and after dinner was shown a form of G.C.M. on an officer, which I had filled up as Judge Advocate a day or two before. It was covered with comments in pencil by the new A.A. and Q.M.G., and the D.A.A.G. asked me what I thought he ought to do. Now, I can be as severe a stickler for technicalities as any one, I believe, when the occasion demands it, and as all my G.C.M. forms had previously gone through without criticism, I looked through the comments with care. At a certain stage in the proceedings the form provides this question: "Do you intend to call any other witness in your defence?" Answer, "No." The form then adds this subsidiary question, "Is he a witness as to character only?" Now, as the accused had answered that he did not wish to call *any* witnesses, in my simplicity I considered that it became immaterial to ask what these witnesses were going to prove—if, in fact, they were not going to give any evidence at all. Comment by the A.A. and Q.M.G.: "This question ought to have been asked and answered. The omission to do so is most irregular and serious." I told the D.A.A.G. that I thought the best thing to do was to rub out all the comments, and take the form in to the general. Whatever he did,—as he is now safely back in England,—the D.A.A.G. appears to have avoided getting into any very serious trouble.

G.C.M.'s comprised less than 5 per cent, I should think, of the total number of courts-martial in France, and should be relegated as soon as possible to the limbo of forgotten things.

Courts-martial may be held anywhere, but the most important thing in the forward area is to "get on with it," as delay usually means that some witnesses will become casualties. The most dramatic trial in which I took part was during the fighting round Kemmel in April or May 1918. An officer was charged with cowardice and desertion during the desperate fighting which was going on, and I was specially asked by the Army if I would defend him. The trial took place amid the noise of battle raging a few miles away, and it was held within three days of the date of the alleged offence, as the brigade to which the accused belonged was in support, and might be sent back into the line at any moment. I wish I could depict the scene: the members of the Court sitting in a battered little farmhouse parlour, and the brother officers of the accused recounting the story of the fight, and the action of the accused on

the eventful day. The members of the Court were themselves fully acquainted with what had happened during the operations, for they had been through it all; and the tense strain which pervaded the scene, the coolness of the accused, and the worn faces of the witnesses who had only just emerged from,—and, as indeed happened, were expecting at any moment to be plunged again into, — the inferno, formed a picture full of dramatic interest. In the end the accused was acquitted on the charge of cowardice, and so escaped the ignominy of the most awful crime of which a soldier, or any one who calls himself a man, could be guilty.

But this scene really was typical of many others. I remember once at Hill Top (an unhealthy spot familiar to all denizens of the salient) a heavy shell bursting near us, upsetting the table, and covering everything with mud,—an incident which would not normally conduce to the dignity of a Court, but which in the circumstances added, if possible, to the impressiveness of the proceedings. On another occasion, near Kempton Park, an air raid took place while the Court was sitting. During the usual hubbub of archies, machine-guns, and rifles, we carried on; but, when "the birds had laid their eggs," the President suggested that the Court should adjourn for a while. I protested on the ground that I wanted this to be an exception to the rule, *Inter arma silent leges.* Nobody, of course, had the slightest idea what I was talking about, but we did not stop, and finished all the cases sent to us for trial.

In conclusion, after having had personal experiences of the trial of some 1200 cases by court-martial in France and Flanders, I should like to point out two main reforms which are urgently needed in court-martial procedure. Just as offences by clergymen are tried before a Court consisting partly of clergymen presided over by the Chancellor of the Diocese, who is a trained lawyer, so I think that the members of every court-martial should consist of officers, with a trained lawyer as President. In no other way can the evidence be duly sifted or justice administered by courts-martial. The appointment of a Judge-Advocate or a C.M.O. is merely a half-way house; it is not far enough along the road. Either the legal expert dominates the Court, in which case he ought to be President, or he adopts the attitude of a mere legal adviser, in which case it is by no means a certainty that justice will be done.

Again, although, on the whole, considering the circumstances under which courts-martial were often held, and provided a strong C.M.O. was present, I think that courts-martial were carried through in France not only with every desire to be fair, but with very satisfactory results, mistakes must sometimes occur, and in the present state of military law there is no means whereby

an appeal can be lodged against a conviction by court-martial. It is true that every conviction and sentence has to be confirmed by some senior officer, and, in the case of a death sentence, by the Commander-in-Chief himself, after receiving reports from the accused's C.O., and his Brigade, Divisional, Corps, and Army Commander. But, in my opinion, the system of confirmation is very undesirable, if indeed it is not actually vicious. For the reasons which I have already given, it tends to destroy the independence of the tribunal, as well as leaving the final decision in the matter in the hands of officers who have no special, if any, legal experience; who have not seen or heard the witnesses, and who are seriously handicapped by their military training and instinct in their efforts to mete out impartial and disinterested justice. Is it fair or consistent that a Court of Criminal Appeal should have been set up in respect of convictions in criminal Courts, and not in the case of convictions by courts-martial?

I suggest that every person convicted by court-martial, (subject to the exigencies of moving warfare), should be entitled to apply for leave to appeal to a Court of Appeal presided over by a permanent legal judge appointed for the purpose, and conversant with military affairs, and that the present system of confirmation by military officers should be abolished.

It is worthy of note that the Committee which has been set up by the War Office to inquire into military law and the procedure of courts-martial, does not possess a single member who has had any real personal experience during the war as a member of F.G.C.M. Let us hope, however, that the Committee will make an effort to find out what the real position is, and will not shrink from such drastic reforms as may be necessary to enable the members of courts-martial in the future, without fear and with independence of judgment, to administer the sacred duty entrusted to them.

ARTHUR PAGE.

SIMON.

BY J. STORER CLOUSTON.

VI. AT NIGHT.

WHEN Simon Rattar came to his present villa, he brought from his old house in the middle of the town (which had been his father's before him) a vast accumulation of old books and old papers. Being a man who never threw away an opportunity or anything else, and also a person of the utmost tidiness, he compromised by keeping this litter in the spare rooms at the top of the house. In fact Simon was rather pleased at discovering this use for his superfluous apartments, for he hated wasting anything.

On this same morning, just before he started for his office, he had again called his housemaid and given her particular injunctions that these rooms were not to be disturbed during the day. He added that this was essential because he expected a gentleman that evening who would be going through some of the old papers with him.

Perhaps it was the vague feeling of disquiet which possessed Mary MacLean this morning that made his injunction seem a little curious. She had been with the master three years, and never presumed or dreamt of presuming to touch his papers. He might have known that, thought she, without having to tell her not to. Indeed, she felt a little aggrieved at the command, and in the course of the morning she made a discovery that seemed to her a further reflection on her discretion.

When she came to dust the passage in which these rooms opened, her eye was at once caught by a sheet of white paper pinned to each of the three doors. On each of these sheets was written in her master's hand the words, "This room not to be entered. Papers to be undisturbed." The result was a warning to those who take superfluous precautions. Under ordinary circumstances Mary would never have thought of touching the handles of those doors. Now, she looked at them for a few moments and then tried the handle nearest to her. The door was locked. She tried the second and the third, and they stood locked too. And the three keys had all been removed.

"To think of the master locking the doors!" said she to herself, after failing at each in turn. "As if I'd have tried to open them!"

That top storey was of the semi-attic kind, with roofs that sloped and a skylight in one of them, and the slates close overhead. It was a grey windy morning, and as she

stood there, alone in that large house save for the cook far away in the kitchen, with a loose slate rattling in the gusts and a glimpse of clouds driving over the skylight, she began all at once to feel uncomfortable. These locked doors were uncanny—something was not as it should be; there was a sinister moan in the wind; the slate did not rattle quite like an ordinary slate. Tales of her childhood, tales from the superstitious Western Islands, rushed into her mind. And then, all at once, she heard another sound. She heard it but for one instant, and then with a pale face she fled downstairs and stood for a space in the hall, trembling and wondering.

She wondered first whether the sound had really come from behind the locked doors, and whether it actually was some one stealthily moving. She wondered next whether she could bring herself to confide in cook and stand Janet's cheerful scorn. She ended by saying not a word, and waiting to see what happened when the master came home.

He returned as usual in time for a cup of tea. It was pretty dark by then, and Mary was upstairs lighting the gas (but she did not venture up to the top floor). She heard Mr Rattar come into the hall, and then, quite distinctly this time, she heard overhead a dull sound, a kind of gentle thud. The next moment she heard her master running upstairs, and when he was safely past she ran even more swiftly down and burst into the kitchen.

"There's something in yon top rooms!" she panted.

"There's something in your top storey!" snapped cook; and poor Mary said no more.

When she brought his tea in to Mr Rattar, she seemed to read in his first glance at her the same expression that had disturbed her in the morning, and yet the next moment he was speaking in his ordinary grumpy, laconic way.

"Have you noticed rats in the house?" he asked.

"Rats, sir!" she exclaimed. "Oh no, sir; I don't think there are any rats."

". . . I saw one just now," he said. "If we see it again we must get some rat poison."

So it had only been a rat! Mary felt vastly relieved, and yet not altogether easy. One could not venture to doubt the master, but it was a queer-like sound for a rat to make.

Mr Rattar had brought back a great many papers to-day and sat engrossed in them till dinner. After dinner he fell to work again, and then about nine o'clock he rang for her and said—

"The gentleman I expect this evening will probably be late in coming. Don't sit up. I'll hear him and let him in myself. We shall be working late, and I shall be going upstairs about those papers. If you hear anybody moving about it will only be this gentleman and myself."

This was rather a long speech for silent Simon, and Mary thought it considerate of him

to explain any nocturnal sounds beforehand: unusually considerate, in fact, for he seldom went out of his way to explain things. And yet those few minutes in his presence made her uncomfortable afresh. She could not keep her eyes away from that red cut on his chin. It made him seem odd-like, she thought. And then as she passed through the hall she heard faintly from the upper regions that slate rattling again. At least it was either the slate or—she recalled a story of her childhood, and hurried on to the kitchen.

She and the cook shared the same bedroom. It was fairly large, with two beds in it, and along with the kitchen and other back premises it was shut off from the front part of the house by a door at the end of the hall. Cook was asleep within ten minutes. Mary could hear her heavy breathing above the incessant droning and whistling of the wind, and she envied her with all her Highland heart. In her own glen people would have understood how she felt, but here she dared not confess lest she were laughed at. It was such a vague and nameless feeling, a sixth sense warning her that all was not well, that *something* was in the air. The longer she lay awake, the more certain she grew that evil was afoot, and yet what could be its shape? Everything in that quiet and respectable household was going on exactly as usual, everything that any one else would have considered material. The little things she had noticed would be considered absurd trifles by the sensible. She knew that as well as they.

She thought she had been in bed about an hour, though the time passed so slowly that it might have been less, when she heard, faintly and gently but quite distinctly, the door from the hall into the back premises being opened. It seemed to be held open for nearly a minute, as though some one were standing there listening. She moved a little and the bed creaked; and then, as gently as it had been opened, the door was closed again.

Had the intruder come through or gone away? And could it only be the master doing this curious thing, or was it some one—or something—else? Dreadful minutes passed, but there was not a sound of any one moving in the back passage or the kitchen, and then in the distance she could hear the grating noise of the front door being opened and the rush of wind that accompanied it. It was closed sharply in a moment, and she could catch the sound of steps in the hall and the master's voice making some remark. Another voice replied, gruff and muffled and indistinct, and then again the master spoke. Evidently the late caller had arrived, and a moment later she heard the library door shut, and it was plain that he and Mr Rattar were closeted there.

They seemed to remain in the library about quarter of an hour before the door opened

again, and in a moment the stairs were creaking faintly. Evidently one or both were going up for the old papers.

All this was exactly what she had been led to expect, and ought to have reassured her, yet, for no reason at all, the conviction remained as intense and disturbing as ever, that something unspeakable was happening in this respectable house. The minutes dragged by till quite half an hour must have passed, and then she heard the steps descending. They came down very slowly this time, and very heavily. The obvious explanation was that they were bringing down one of those boxes filled with dusty papers which she had often seen in the closed rooms; yet, though Mary knew perfectly that this was the common-sense of the matter, a feeling of horror increased till she could scarcely refrain from crying out. If cook had not such a quick temper and such a healthy contempt for this kind of fancy, she would have rushed across to her bed; but as it was, she simply lay and trembled.

The steps sounded still heavy but more muffled on the hall carpet, though whether they were the steps of one man or two she could not feel sure. And then she heard the front door open again and then close; so that it seemed plain that the visitor had taken the box with him and gone away. And with this departure came a sense of relief, as devoid of rational foundation as the sense of horror before. She felt at last that if she could only hear the master going upstairs to bed, she might go to sleep.

But though she listened hard as she lay there in the oppressive dark, she heard not another sound so long as she kept awake, and that was for some time, she thought. She did get off at last, and had been asleep she knew not how long when she awoke drowsily, with a confused impression that the front door had been shut again. How late it was she could but guess—about three or four in the morning her instinct told her. But then came sleep again, and in the morning the last part of her recollections was a little uncertain.

At breakfast the master was as silently formidable as ever, and he never said a word about his visitor. When Mary went to the top floor later the papers were off the doors and the keys replaced.

VII. THE DRIVE HOME.

Under the grey autumnal sky Miss Cicely Farmond drove out of the town, wrapped in Ned Cromarty's overcoat. He assured her he never felt cold, and as she glanced a little shyly up at the strapping figure by her side, she said

to herself that he certainly was the toughest-looking man of her acquaintance, and she felt a little less contrition for the loan. She was an independent young lady, and from no one else would she have accepted such a favour; but the laird of Stanesland had such an offhand, authoritative way with him that, somewhat to her own surprise, she had protested—and submitted.

The trap was a high dog-cart, and the mare a flier.

"What a splendid horse!" she exclaimed, as they spun up the first hill.

"Isn't she?" said Ned. "And she can go all the way like this too."

Cicely was therefore a little surprised when, at the next hill, this flier was brought to a walk.

"I thought we were going all the way like that!" she laughed.

Ned glanced down at her.

"Are you in a hurry?" he inquired.

"Not particularly," she admitted.

"No more am I," said he, and this time he smiled down at her in a very friendly way.

So far they had talked casually on any indifferent subject that came to hand, but now his manner grew a little more intimate.

"Are you going to stay on with the Cromartys long?" he asked.

"I am wondering myself," she confessed.

"I hope you will," he said bluntly.

"It is very kind of you to say so," she said, smiling at him a little shyly.

"I mean it. The fact is, Miss Farmond, you are a bit of a treat."

The quaintness of the phrase was irresistible, and she laughed outright.

"Am I?"

"It's a fact," said he; "you see, I live an odd lonely kind of life here, and for most of my career I've lived an odd lonely kind of life too, so far as girls were concerned. It may sound rum to you to hear a backwood hunks of my time of life confessing to finding a girl of your age a bit of a treat; but it's a fact."

"Yes," she said, "I should have thought I must seem rather young and foolish."

"Lord, I don't mean that!" he exclaimed. "I mean that I must seem a pretty uninteresting bit of elderly shoe-leather."

"Uninteresting? Oh no!" she cried in protest, and then checked herself and her colour rose a little.

He smiled humorously.

"I can't see you out of this glass eye unless I turn round, so whether you're pulling my leg or not I don't know; but I was just saying to old Simon that the only kind of lady likely to take an interest in me was a female collector of antique curiosities, and you don't seem that sort, Miss Farmond."

She said nothing for a moment, and then asked—

"Were you discussing ladies then with Mr Rattar?"

He also paused for a moment before replying—

"Incidentally in the course

of a gossip, as the old chap hadn't got my business ready for me. By the way, did you get much change out of him?"

She shook her head a little mournfully.

"Nothing at all. He just asked questions instead of answering them."

"So he did with me! Confound the man. I fancy he has made too much money and is beginning to take it easy. That's one advantage of not being too rich, Miss Farmond, it keeps you from waxing fat."

"I'm not likely to wax fat then!" she laughed, and yet it was not quite a cheerful laugh.

He turned quickly and looked at her sympathetically.

"That your trouble?" he inquired in his outspoken way.

Cicely was not by way of giving her confidences easily, but this straightforward, friendly attack penetrated her reserve.

"It makes one so dependent," she said, her voice even lower than usual.

"That must be the devil," he admitted.

"It is!" said she.

He whipped up the mare and ruminated in silence. Then he remarked—

"I'm just wondering."

Cicely began to smile.

"Wondering what?"

"What the devil there can be that isn't utterly uninteresting about me—assuming you weren't pulling my leg."

"Oh," she said, "no man can be uninteresting who has seen as much and done as much as you have."

"The Lord keep you of that opinion!" he said, half humorously, but only half, it seemed. "It's true I've knocked about and been knocked about, but I'd have thought you'd have judged more by results."

She laughed a little low laugh.

"Do you think yourself the results are very bad?"

"Judging by the mirror, beastly! Judging by other standards—well, one can't see oneself in one's full naked horror, thank Heaven for it too! But I'm not well read, and I'm not—but what's the good in telling you? You're clever enough to see for yourself."

For a man who had no intention of paying compliments, Ned Cromarty had a singular gift for administering the pleasantest — because it was so evidently the most genuine—form of flattery. In fact, had he but known it, he was a universal favourite with women, whenever he happened to meet them; only he had not the least suspicion of the fact —which made him all the more favoured.

"I don't know very many men," said Cicely, with her serious expression and a conscientious air, "and so perhaps I am not a good judge, but certainly you seem to me quite unlike all the others."

"I told you," he laughed, "that the female would have to be a bit of a collector."

"Oh," she cried, quite serious still, "I don't mean that in the least. I don't like freaks a bit myself. I only mean—well, people do differ

in character and experience, don't they?"

"I guess you're pretty wise," said he simply. "And I'm sized up right enough. However, the trouble at present is this blamed mare goes too fast!"

On their left, the chimneys and roof of a large mansion showed through the surrounding trees. In this wind-swept seaboard country, its acres of plantation were a conspicuous landmark, and marked it as the seat of some outstanding local magnate. These trees were carried down to the road in a narrow belt enclosing an avenue that ended in a lodge and gates. At the same time that the lodge came into view round a bend in the road, a man on a bicycle appeared ahead of them, going in the same direction, and bent over his handle-bars against the wind.

"Hullo, that's surely Malcolm Cromarty!" said Ned.

"So it is!" she exclaimed, and there was a note of surprise in her voice. "I wonder where he has been."

The cyclist dismounted at the lodge gates a few moments before the trap pulled up there too, and the young man turned and greeted them. Or rather he greeted Miss Farmond, for his smile was clearly aimed at her alone.

"Hullo! Where have you been?" he cried.

"Where have you?" she retorted as she jumped out and let him help her off with the driving coat.

They made a remarkably good-looking young couple standing together there on the road, and their manner to one another was evidently that of two people who knew each other well. Sitting on his high driving-seat, Ned Cromarty turned his head well round so as to bring his sound eye to bear, and looked at them in silence. When she handed him his coat and thanked him afresh, he merely laughed, told her, in his outspoken way, that all the fun had been his, and whipped up his mare.

"That's more the sort of fellow!" he said to himself gloomily, and for a little the thought seemed to keep him depressed. And then, as he let the recollections of their drive have their own way undisturbed, he began to smile again, and kept smiling most of the way home.

The road drew ever nearer to the sea, trees and hedgerows grew ever rarer and more stunted, and then he was driving through a patch of planting hardly higher than a shrubbery up to an ancient building on the very brink of the cliffs. The sea crashed white below and stretched grey and cold to the horizon, the wind whistled round the battlements and sighed through the stunted trees, and Ned (who had been too absorbed to remember his coat) slapped his arms and stamped his feet as he descended before a nail-studded front door with a battered coat-of-arms above it.

"Lord, what a place!" he said to himself, half critically, half affectionately.

The old castle of Stanesland

was but a small house as castles, or even mansions, go, almost devoid of architectural ornament, and evidently built in a sterner age simply for security, and but little embellished by the taste of more degenerate times. As a specimen of a small early fifteenth-century castle it was excellent; as a home it was inconvenience incarnate. How so many draughts found their way through such thick walls was a perennial mystery, and how to convey dishes from the kitchen to the dining-room without their getting cold an almost insoluble problem.

The laird and his sister sat down to lunch, and in about ten minutes Miss Cromarty remarked—

"So you drove Cicely Farmond home?"

Her brother nodded. He had mentioned the fact as soon as he came in, and rather wondered why she referred to it again.

Miss Cromarty smiled her own peculiar, shrewd, worldly little smile, and said—

"You are very silent, Ned."

Lilian Cromarty was a few years older than her brother, though one would hardly have guessed it. Her trim figure, bright eyes, vivacity of expression when she chose to be vivacious, and quick movements, might have belonged to a woman twenty years younger. She had never been pretty, but she was always perfectly dressed, and her smile could be anything she chose to make it. Until her youngest brother came into the property, the place had been let, and she had lived with her friends and relations. She had had a good time, she always frankly confessed, but as frankly admitted that it was a relief to settle down at last.

"I was thinking," said her brother.

"About Cicely?" she asked in her frankly audacious way.

He opened his eyes for a moment, and then laughed.

"You needn't guess again, Lilian," he admitted.

"Funny little thing," she observed.

"Funny?" he repeated, and his tone brought an almost imperceptible change of expression into his sister's eye.

"Oh," she said, as though throwing the subject aside, "she is nice and quite pretty, but very young, and not very sophisticated, is she? However, I should think she would be a great success as a man's girl. That low voice and those eyes of hers are very effective. Pass me the salt, Ned."

Ned looked at her in silence, and then over her shoulder out through the square window set in the vast thickness of the wall, to the grey horizon line.

"I guess you've recommended me to marry once or twice, Lilian," he observed.

"Don't 'guess,' please!" she laughed, "or I'll stick my bowie-knife or gun or something into you! Yes, I've always advised you to marry—if you found the right kind of wife."

She took some credit to herself for this disinterested

advice, since, if he took it, the consequences would be decidedly disconcerting to herself; but she had never pointed out any specific lady yet, or made any conspicuous effort to find one for him.

"Well——" he began, and then broke off.

"You're not thinking of Cicely, are you?" she asked, still in the same bright light way, but with a quick searching look at him.

"It seems a bit absurd. I don't imagine for an instant she'd look at me."

"Wouldn't look——!" she began derisively, and then pulled herself up very sharply, and altered her tactics on the instant. "She might think you a little too old for her," she said in a tone of entire agreement with him.

"And also that I've got one too few eyes, and in fact, several other criticisms."

His sister shrugged her shoulders.

"A girl of that age might think those things," she admitted, "but it seems to me that the criticism ought to be on the other side. Who is she?"

Ned looked at her, and she broke into a laugh.

"Well," she said. "I suppose we both have a pretty good idea. She's somebody's something—Alfred Cromarty's, I believe; though, of course, her mother may have fibbed, for she doesn't look much like the Cromartys. Anyhow, that pretty well puts her out of the question."

"Why?"

"If you were a mere nobody it mightn't make so much difference, but your wife must have some sort of a family behind her. One needn't be a snob to think that one mother and a guess at the father is hardly enough!"

"After all, that's up to me. I wouldn't be wanting to marry her great-mothers, even if she had any."

She shrugged her shoulders again.

"My dear Ned, I'm no prude, but there's always some devilment in the blood in these cases."

"Rot!" said he.

"Well, rot if you like, but I know more than one instance."

He said nothing for a moment, and as he sat in silence a look of keen anxiety came into her eye. She hid it instantly and compressed her lips, and then abruptly her brother said—

"I wonder whether she's at all taken up with Malcolm Cromarty?"

She ceased to meet his eye, and her own became expressionless.

"They have spent some months in the same house. At their age the consequences seem pretty inevitable."

She had contrived to suggest a little more than she said, and he started in his chair.

"What do you know?" he demanded.

"Oh, of course there would be a dreadful row if anything was actually known abroad. Sir Reginald has probably other ideas for his heir."

"Then there *is* something between them?"

She nodded; and though she still did not meet his eye, he accepted the nod with a grim look that passed in a moment into a melancholy laugh.

"Well," he said, rising, "it was a pretty absurd idea anyhow. I'll go and have a look at myself in the glass and try to see the funny side of it!"

His sister sat very still after he had left the room.

VIII. SIR REGINALD.

Cicely Farmond and Malcolm Cromarty walked up the avenue together, he pushing his bicycle, she walking by his side with a more than usually serious expression.

"Then you won't tell me where you've been?" said he.

"You won't tell me where you've been!"

He was silent for a moment, and then said confidentially—

"We might as well say we've been somewhere together. I mean, if any one asks."

"Thank you, I don't need to fib," said she.

"I don't mean I need to. Only——" he seemed to find it difficult to explain.

"I shall merely say I have been for a walk, and you need only say you have been for a ride—if you don't want to say where you have really been."

"And if you don't want to mention that you were driving with Ned Cromarty," he retorted.

"He only very kindly offered me a lift!"

She looked quickly at him as she spoke, and as quickly away again. The glint in her eye seemed to displease him.

"You needn't always be so sharp with me, Cicely," he complained.

"You shouldn't say stupid things."

Both were silent for a space, and then in a low mournful voice he said—

"I wish I knew how to win your sympathy, Cicely. You don't absolutely hate me, do you?"

"Of course I don't hate you. But the way to get a girl's sympathy is not always to keep asking for it."

He looked displeased again.

"I don't believe you know what I mean!"

"I don't believe you do either."

He grew tender.

"*Your* sympathy, Cicely, would make all the difference to my life!"

"Now, Malcolm——" she began in a warning voice.

"Oh, I'm not asking you to love me again," he assured her quickly. "It is only sympathy I demand!"

"But you mix them up so easily. It isn't safe to give you anything."

"I won't again!" he assured her.

"Well," she said, though not very sympathetically, "what do you want to be sympathised with about now?"

"When you offer me sympathy in that tone, I can't give you my confidence!" he said unhappily.

"Really, Malcolm, how can I possibly tell what your confidence is going to be beforehand? Perhaps it won't deserve sympathy."

"If you knew the state of my affairs!" he said darkly.

"A few days ago you told me they were very promising," she said with a little smile.

"So they would be—so they are—if—if only you would care for me, Cicely!"

"You tell me they are promising when you want me to marry you, and desperate when you want me to sympathise with you," she said a little cruelly. "Which am I to believe?"

"Hush! Here's Sir Reginald," he said.

The gentleman who came through a door in the walled garden beside the house was a fresh-coloured, white-haired man of sixty; slender and not above middle height, but very erect, and with the carriage of a person a little conscious of being of some importance. Sir Reginald Cromarty was, in fact, extremely conscious of his position in life, and the rather superior and condescending air he was wont to assume in general society made it a little difficult for a stranger to believe that he could actually be the most popular person in the county, especially as it was not hard to discover that his temper could easily become peppery upon provocation. If, however, the stranger chanced to provide the worthy baronet with even the smallest opening for exhibiting his extraordinary kindness of heart—were it only by getting wet in a shower or mislaying a walking-stick—he would quickly comprehend. And the baronet's sympathy never waited to be summoned: it seemed to hover constantly over all men and women he met, spying for its chance.

He himself was totally unconscious of this attribute, and imagined the respect in which he was held to be due to his lineage, rank, and superior breeding and understanding. Indeed, few people in this world can have cut a more dissimilar figure as seen from his own and from other men's eyes, though as both parties were equally pleased with Sir Reginald Cromarty, it mattered little.

At the sight of Cicely his smile revealed the warmth of his feelings in that direction.

"Ah, my dear girl," said he, "we've been looking for you. Where have you been?"

"I've been having a walk."

She smiled at him as she answered, and on his side it was easy to see that the good gentleman was enraptured, and that Miss Farmond was not likely to be severely cross-examined as to her movements. Towards Malcolm, on the other hand, though his greeting was kindly enough, his eye was critical. The young author's tie seemed to be regarded with particular displeasure.

"My God, Margaret, imagine being found dead in such a thing!" he had exclaimed

to his wife, after his first sight of it; and time had done nothing to diminish his distaste for this indication of a foreign way of life.

Lady Cromarty came out of the garden a moment later: a dark thin-faced lady with a gracious manner when she spoke, but with lips that were usually kept very tight shut and an eye that could easily be hard.

"Nearly time for lunch," she said. "You two had better hurry up!"

The young people hurried on to the house, and the baronet and his lady walked slowly behind.

"So they have been away all morning together, Reginald," she remarked.

"Oh, I don't think so," said he. "He had his bicycle and she has been walking."

"You are really too unsuspicious, Reggie!"

"A woman, my dear, is perhaps a little too much the reverse where a young couple is concerned. I have told you before, and I repeat it now emphatically, that neither Cicely nor Malcolm is in a position to contemplate matrimony for an instant."

"He is your heir—and Cicely is quite aware of it."

"I assure you, Margaret," he said with great conviction, "that Cicely is not a girl with mercenary motives. She is quite charming——"

"Oh, I know your opinion of her, Reggie," Lady Cromarty broke in, a trifle impatiently, "and I am fond of her too, as you know. Still, I don't believe a girl who can use her eyes so effectively is quite as simple as you think."

Sir Reginald laughed indulgently.

"Really, my love, even the best of women are sometimes a trifle uncharitable! But in any case Malcolm has quite enough sense of his future position to realise that his wife must be somebody without the blemish on her birth, which is no fault of dear Cicely's, but—er—makes her ineligible for this particular position."

"I wish I could think that Malcolm is the kind of young man who would consult anything but his own wishes. I have told you often enough, Reggie, that I don't think it is wise to keep these two young people living here in the same house for months on end."

"But what can one do?" asked the benevolent baronet. "Neither of them has any home of their own. Hang it, I'm the head of their family, and I'm bound to show them a little hospitality."

"But Malcolm has rooms in town. He needn't spend months on end at Keldale."

The baronet was silent for a moment. Then he said—

"To tell the truth, I'm afraid Malcolm is not turning out quite so well as I had hoped. He certainly ought to be away doing something. At the same time, hang it! you wouldn't have me turn my own kinsman and heir out of my house, Margaret?"

Lady Cromarty sighed, and then her thin lips tightened.

"You are hopeless, Reggie. I sometimes feel as though I

were here merely as matron of a home for lost Cremartys! Well, I hope your confidence won't be abused. I confess I don't feel very comfortable about it myself."

"Well, well," said Sir Reginald. "My own eyes are open too, I assure you. I shall watch them very carefully at lunch, in the light of what you have been saying."

The baronet was an old Etonian, and as his life had been somewhat uneventful since, he was in the habit of drawing very largely on his recollections of that nursery of learning. Lunch had hardly begun before a question from Cicely set him going, and for the rest of the meal he regaled her with these reminiscences.

After luncheon he said to his wife—

"Upon my word, I noticed nothing whatever amiss. Cicely is a very sensible as well as a deuced pretty girl."

"I happened to look at Malcolm occasionally," said she.

Sir Reginald thought that she seemed to imply more than she said, but then women were like that, he had noticed, and if one took all their implications into account, life would be a troublesome affair.

IX. A PHILOSOPHER.

During luncheon an exceedingly efficient person had been moving briskly behind the chairs. His face was so expressionless, his mouth so tightly closed, and his air of concentration on the business in hand so intense, that he seemed the perfect type of the silent butler. But as soon as lunch was over, and while Cicely still stood in the hall listening with a dubious eye to Malcolm's suggestion of a game of billiards, Mr James Bisset revealed the other side of his personality. He came up to the young couple with just sufficient deference, but no more, and in an accent which experts would have recognised as the hall-mark of the western part of North Britain, said—

"Excuse me, miss, but I've mended your bicycle, and I'll show it you if ye like, and just explain the principle of the thing."

There was at least as much command as invitation in his tones. The billiard invitation was refused, and with a hidden smile Cicely followed him to the bicycle house.

Expert knowledge was James Bisset's foible. Of some subjects, such as buttling, carpentry, and mending bicycles, it was practical; of others, such as shooting, gardening, and motoring, it was more theoretical. To Sir Reginald and my lady he was quite indispensable, for he could repair almost anything, knew his own more particular business from A to Z, and was ready at any moment to shoulder any responsibility. Sir Reginald's keeper, gardener, and chauffeur were apt, how-

ever, to be a trifle less enthusiastic, Mr Bisset's passion for expounding the principles of their professions sometimes exceeding his tact.

In person, he was an active stoutly-built man (though far too energetic to be fat), with blunt rounded features, eyes a little protruding, and sandy hair and a reddish complexion, which made his age an unguessable secret. He might have been in the thirties, or he might have been in the fifties.

"With regard to these ladies' bicycles, miss—" he began with a lecturer's air.

But by this time Cicely was also an expert in side-tracking her friend's theoretical essays.

"Oh, how clever of you!" she exclaimed rapturously. "It looks as good as ever!"

The interruption was too gratifying to offend.

"Better in some ways," he said complacently. "The principle of these things is——"

"I did miss it this morning," she hurried on. "In fact, I had to have quite a long walk. Luckily Mr Cromarty of Stanesland gave me a lift coming home."

"Oh, indeed, miss? Stanesland gave ye a lift, did he? An interesting gentleman yon."

This time she made no effort to divert Mr Bisset's train of thought.

"You think Mr Cromarty interesting, then?" said she.

"They say he's hanged a man with his ain hands," said Bisset impressively.

"What?" she cried.

"For good and sufficient reason, we'll hope, miss. But whatever the way of it, it makes a gentleman more interesting in a kin' of way than the usual run. And then looking at the thing on general principles, the theory of hanging is——"

"Oh, but surely," she interrupted, "that isn't the only reason why Mr Cromarty—I mean, why you think he is interesting?"

"There's that glass eye, too. That's very interesting, miss."

She still seemed unsatisfied.

"His glass eye! Oh—you mean it has a story?"

"Vera possibly. He says himself it was done wi' a whisky bottle, but possibly that's making the best of it. But what interests me, miss, about yon eye is this——"

He paused dramatically, and she inquired in an encouraging voice—

"Yes, Bisset?"

"It's the principle of introducing a foreign substance so near the man's brain. What's glass? What's it consist of?"

"I—I don't know," confessed Cicely weakly.

"Silica! And what's silica? Practically the same as sand! Well, now, if ye put a handful of sand into a man's brain—or anyhow next door to it—it's bound to have some effect, bound to have some effect!"

Bisset's voice fell to a very serious note, and as he was famous for the range of his reading and was generally said to know practically by heart 'The People's Self-Educator in Science and Art,' Cicely asked a little apprehensively—

"But what effect can it possibly have?"

"It might take him different ways," said the philosopher cautiously though sombrely. "But it's a good thing, anyway, Miss Farmond, that the laird of Stanesland is no likely to get married."

"Isn't he?" she asked again, with that encouraging note.

Bisset replied with another question, asked in an ominous voice.

"Have ye seen yon castle o' his, miss?"

Cicely nodded.

"I called there once with Lady Cromarty."

"A most interesting place, miss, illustrating the principle of thae castles very instructively."

Mr Bisset had evidently been studying architecture as well as science, and no doubt would have given Miss Farmond some valuable information on the subject. But she seemed to lack enthusiasm for it to-day.

"But will the castle prevent him marrying?" she inquired with a smile.

"The lady in it will," said the philosopher with a sudden descent into worldly shrewdness.

"Miss Cromarty! Why?"

"She's mair comfortable there than setting off on her travels again. That's a fac', miss."

"But—but supposing he ——" Cicely began and then paused.

"Oh, the laird's no' the marrying sort, anyhow. He says to me himself one day when I'd taken the liberty of suggesting that a lady would suit the castle fine—we was shooting, and I was carrying his cartridges, which I do for amusement, miss, whiles—'Bisset,' says he, 'the lady will have to be a damned keen shot to think me worth a cartridge. I'm too tough for the table,' says he, 'and not ornamental enough to stuff. They've let me off so far, and why the he—' begging your pardon, miss, but Stanesland uses strong expressions sometimes. 'Why the something,' says he, 'should they want to put me in the bag now? I'm happier free—and so's the lady.' But he's a grand shot and a vera friendly gentleman, vera friendly indeed. It's a pity though he's that ugly."

"Ugly!" she exclaimed. "Oh, I don't think him ugly at all. He's very striking-looking. I think he is rather handsome."

Bisset looked at her with a benevolently reproving eye.

"Weel, miss, it's all a matter of taste, but to my mind Stanesland is a fine gentleman, but the vera opposite extreme from a Venus." He broke off and glanced towards the house. "Oh, help us! There's one of thae helpless women crying on me. How this house would get on wanting me—!"

He left Miss Farmond to paint the gloomy picture for herself.

(To be continued.)

EASTERN NIGHTS—AND FLIGHTS.

(BEING AN INTERRUPTED SEQUEL TO 'AN AIRMAN'S OUTINGS.')

A RECORD OF CAPTURE IN PALESTINE, ADVENTURE IN TURKEY, AND ESCAPE THROUGH RUSSIA.

BY "CONTACT" (CAPTAIN ALAN BOTT, M.C.)

CHAPTER I.—THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS.

MOST of us who were at close grips with the Great War will remember the habit of speculation about life on the far side of the front. Somewhere beyond the frontier of trenches, we realised, were our opposite numbers — infantrymen, gunners, aviators, staff officers, mess orderlies, generals, captains, lance-corporals — each according to character, rank, and duties, and to the position he occupied by reason of ability, courage, initiative, old age, self-advertisement, or wire-pulling. We saw them through a glass, darkly—a glass that, being partly concave, partly convex, and almost impenetrable throughout, showed us our opposite numbers as distorted reflections of ourselves.

We knew well that if we went through, round, or over this glass we should find ourselves in an unnatural world, where we should be negative instead of positive, passive instead of active, useless scrap-iron instead of working parts of a well-constructed machine. Yet we never considered the possibility of being obliged, in that unreal world, to live such a life of impotence. Our companions, now, might have the bad luck to be dragged there; but our sense of normality would not let us reckon with such an unusual happening in our own case.

And then, perhaps, one fine day or night found us isolated in an attack, or shot down in an air fight; and we would be in the topsy-turvy country of captivity. Some of us, who passed into this country from the curious East, tumbled head-over-heels upon adventures fantastic as those of any fictional explorer of the wonderland Through the Looking-Glass of fancy.

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We were a small band of six scout pilots, one monkey-mascot, and a team of Baby Nieuports, hangared in a large meadow that was the nearest aerodrome to the then front in Palestine. Slightly to the south was the one-time German colony of Sorona, with houses empty but for ugly furniture and ornaments, left behind when the routed Turco-Germans scurried up the coast-line after Allenby's great victory at Gaza. A few miles north was the trench-line, a

few miles east were row upon row of sand-dunes, a sea of that intense blue which is the secret of the Syrian coast, and the ancient port of Jaffa, misnamed "The Beautiful."

The particular job of our detached flight of Nieuports was always to be ready, between dawn and sunrise, to leap into the air at a moment's notice and climb towards whatever enemy aircraft were signalled as approaching from the north. Usually we flew in pairs, for the work was of the tip-and-run variety, and needed, above all things, speed in leaving the ground and speed in climbing; and a larger party would have been slower, because of the exigencies of formation flying.

"A A A four H.A. flying S. towards Mulebbis 10,000 feet A A A" would be telephoned by an anti-aircraft battery. The bell (made out of a Le Rhone cylinder) would clang, the "standing by" pilots would fasten caps and goggles as they raced to their buses, the mechanics would swing the propellers into position as the pilots climbed into the cockpits, the engines would swell from a murmur to a roar, and, three minutes after the sentinel-operator had scribbled the warning, two Nieuports would be away across the sun-browned grass and up into the cool air. A climbing turn, at about 100 feet, and they would streak upward, at an angle of 45 degrees, to the air country above Mulebbis. And the next two pilots on the waiting list would come within easy reach of their flying kit.

Even with the fast-climbing Nieuport it was difficult indeed to reach a height of 10,000 to 12,000 feet in time to get to grips with machines which were at that height while we were reading month-old newspapers on solid earth. But practice, and co-operation with the Archie gunners by means of directional shots, enabled us to find the black-crossed trespassers often enough to give them a wholesome fear of venturing any distance beyond the lines. Indeed I never found a group of German machines, however many they might be, attacking a pair of Nieuports, or S.E. 5's, or Bristol Fighters.

Up till the last few weeks of 1917 the Flying Corps in Palestine had, frankly, a difficult time. This was by no manner of means the fault of the pilots, nor of the R.F.C. Staff on the spot. It was an inevitable result of the policy of gentlemen in England who were giving the Eastern fronts certain types of machine which seemed specially designed to give their crews a minimum chance of defending themselves—types which had to be dumped somewhere, because other gentlemen in England had ordered them in hundreds and thousands long after they should have been obsolete as regards active service. Thus, apart from a few Beardmore Martinsydes—excellent as light bombers, but never

much good as fighting craft, even when they were first used on the French front in 1916—the only British aircraft in Palestine prior to the last few weeks of 1917 were the much too "inherently stable" B.E. brands, officially designed, officially promoted, officially ordered by the thousand, while better privately-designed types were ordered by the score, and officially foisted on oversea squadrons so that they became the unofficial bugbear of active service pilots. And the German fighting pilots in Palestine, particularly one Oberleutnant Felmy, with their Albatross single-seaters, enjoyed themselves immensely—for a while.

With the arrival of a few Nieuports on the British side they enjoyed themselves rather less, and when some Bristol Fighters, and later still some S.E. 5's flew into the arena, the Air Boche, Palestine species, had a perfectly beastly time. The R.F.C. Brigadier-General used his reinforcements to the best advantage, and after one or two special exploits (like that of Captain Peter Drummond, D.S.O., M.C., who, on a Bristol Fighter, destroyed three German machines over their own aerodrome within ten minutes of attacking them) we seldom found any black-crossed craft over our part of the lines.

At the period of which I write—March to May 1918—it was not too much to say that enemy machines, even when in superior force, never fought our Bristol Fighters, S.E. 5's, or Nieuports unless there was no chance of keeping at a safe distance. Once three of us were able to chase five German scouts and one two-seater for twenty miles over enemy country until they reached their hangars at Jenin, out-dived us because of their heavier weight, and landed without the least pretence of showing fight, while we relieved our feelings by looping the loop over their aerodrome.

Those were pleasant days, in pleasant surroundings. Our tents were pitched in an orange grove, which provided shade from the midday sun, privacy from the midnight pilfering of Bedouins, and loveliness at all times. The fruit had just ripened, and by stretching an arm outside the tent-flap, one could pick full-blooded, giant Jaffa oranges. Passing troops bought at the rate of five a penny the best Jaffas, stolen from our enclosure by young imps of Arabs.

In the heat of afternoon the four of us who were not standing by for the next call would mooch through the orange-trees for a siesta; and in the cool of the evening we would drive to the sands for a moonlight bathe in the shimmering Mediterranean. For the rest, one could always visit Jaffa, where were some friendly nurses, and a Syrian barber who could cut hair quite decently. Apart from these attractions, however, and the mud hovel that may or may not have been the house of Simon the Tanner, Jaffa was just like any other town in the Palestine zone of occupation,

with its haphazard medley of Arabs, Jews, and Syrians, all bent on getting-rich-quick by exploiting that highly exploitable person the British soldier.

On the evening before my capture I bathed in the company of a German cadet; a circumstance which I thought unusually novel, not foreseeing that my next bathe would also be in the company of a German, albeit under very different conditions.

One Offizierstellvertreter Willi Hampel had been shot down and captured, and was in the prisoners' compound at Ludd. It was decided that before forwarding Hampel to Egypt, the best way to milk him of information would be for another aviator to entertain him, while discussing aeronautics on a basis of common interest; and I was detailed for the duty. This rather went against the grain; but Willi knew neither French nor English, and I was the only pilot in the Brigade who could talk German, so that there was no alternative. From his cage I motored Willi to lunch in our mess, showed him our machines and our monkey, and even took him to tea with an agreeable compatriot, in the person of a beautiful German Jewess who was the landlord of some houses at Ramleh.

The information he let slip was not very illuminating—a few truthful statements about machines, pilots, and aerodromes, and a great many obvious lies. But his opinions on our airmen and machines were interesting. Our pilots were splendid, but too reckless, he thought. As for the machines, the Bristol Fighter was the work of the devil, and to be avoided at all costs; the B.E. 8 might safely be attacked unless it were well protected, the British single-seaters were good, but the German Flying Corps regarded the B. E. types as "sehr komisch." Later, when I was myself a prisoner, I found these statements echoed by other German pilots.

As Willi was well-behaved and occasionally informative, and as he had been a flying contemporary of mine on the Western front in 1916 and 1917, I took him for a sea-bathe before he went back to his cage, while taking the precaution to swim closely behind him.

Next day the heat was intense, so that I was glad indeed when the arrival of a A.E.G. from the north gave me the chance to climb to the cool levels of 8,000 to 10,000 feet, flying hatless and in shirt-sleeves. The trespassing two-seater spotted us, and retired before we could reach its height. But the next turn of my flying partner and me, in the late afternoon, brought us the good fortune of sending a Hun bus to earth—from sheer fright, not out of control, unfortunately—in open country. I was well content on landing, for the atmosphere was cooler, less oppressive, and almost pleasant, and my day's work should have been done.

But a pony, a monkey, and mischance conspired to send me

beyond the lines for the third time that day, and the last time for many months. Instead of leaving the aerodrome at once, I remained to play with Bohita, the marmoset-mascot. Ten minutes later the bell clanged a warning. One of the waiting pilots raced to his machine, and was away; but the other, mounted on an energetic little pony, was chasing a polo ball. The pony, being pulled up suddenly, reared, and the rider was thrown. Seeing that he must be hurt, or at any rate shaken, I climbed to his bus and sent word that I would replace him, so that no time should be wasted. It was then about one hour before sunset.

The first Nieuport had a good start, but its pilot was new to the game, and failed to see the white puffs from directional shots fired by the nearest A.A. battery. The last I saw of his bus was as it climbed due east, with the apparent intention of sniffing at a harmless B. E. 8 to see if it were a Hun, and without noticing when I continually switchbacked my machine fore and aft, as a signal that a real Hun was near. I therefore left what should have been my companion bus to its own amusement, and climbed towards the British Archie bursts.

At about 9000 feet I reached their level, and picked up the intruder—a grey-planed two-seater of the latest Rumpler type. When I was still some 800 yards distant its pilot swerved round, and, holding down his machine's nose for extra speed, raced back northward, rather than be forced to fight. I streaked after it, beyond the trenches.

Now the Rumpler was faster than my Nieuport, but was slower on the climb. My only chance of catching up, therefore, was first to gain height and then to lose it again in a slanting dive, with engine on, in the direction of the Boche, and to repeat these tactics. Although each dive brought me a little closer, this method was a slow business. I remember passing Kilkilieh and seeing Nablus (the Biblical Shechem), and still being outside machine-gun range of the black-crossed bus ahead.

It was at a spot west of Nablus, and about twenty miles from the lines, that I got my chance. By then we had nosed down to 6000 feet. Being able to manœuvre twice as quickly as the big two-seater, the little Nieuport was soon in a "blind spot" position, and I attacked from a sideways direction, opening fire at 80 yards. The Rumpler dived almost vertically out of the way, and I overshot.

I was turning again, when from above came a succession of raps—*tatatatatat, tatatat, tatatatatat,*—the unmistakable tap-tapping of aerial machine-gun fire. I looked up and saw three scouts dropping towards me from a cloud-bank.

Swerving right round on an Immelman turn I managed to get underneath the nearest scout as it flattened out. I had just pulled down my top-plane Lewis gun, and was pre-

paring to fire a long burst upward into the belly of the scout, when—*poop!*—my petrol tank opened with a dull thud. The observer in the Rumpler had opened fire at a distance of more than 300 yards (far outside what is the normally effective range for aerial fighting), and by an extraordinary touch of ill-luck for me, some of his bullets had ripped through my tank,—the only circumstance which, at that moment, could have put my Nieuport out of action. The petrol gushed over my trousers and swilled round the floor of the cockpit.

I turned south and had been to make a last-hope effort to reach the trenches before all the fuel had disappeared, when I received a second shock. On looking over the side, I was horrified at seeing that underneath the tank the fuselage was black and smouldering. Next instant some wicked-looking sparks merged into a little flame that licked across the centre of the fuselage. A thrill of fear that was so intense as to be almost physical went through me as I switched off, banked the bus over to the left as far as the joystick would allow, and holding up its nose with opposite rudder, went down in a vertical side-slip—the only possible chance of getting to earth before the machine really caught fire. The traditional "whole of my past life" certainly did not flash before me; but I was conscious of an intense bitterness against fate for allowing this to happen one week before I was to have returned to Cairo, the Neutral, where they dined and cocktailed, and where the local staff officers filled the dances arranged for the poor dear lonely young officers on leave from the front. And I shouted blasphemies into the unhearing air.

I have no hesitation in saying that I was exquisitely afraid as the Nieuport slid downwards at a great speed, for of all deaths that of roasting in an aeroplane while waiting for it to break up has always seemed to me the least attractive. But the gods were kind, for by the time I reached a height of 500 feet the violent rush of air—which incidentally boxed my ear pretty painfully—had overwhelmed the flame and swept it out of existence. The fuselage still smouldered, however, and after righting the bus (now completely emptied of petrol) I lost no time in looking out for a landing-place.

This was a hopeless task. Below was rocky mountain-side, contoured unevenly, with no level nor open spaces, and scarcely any vegetation. There was just one patch of grass, about fifteen yards long; and although this was much too small for a landing-ground, I chose it in preference to bouldered slopes or stony gorges.

After pancaking down to the fringe of the brown grass the Nieuport ran uphill for the length of the patch and was heading for a tree trunk, when I ruddered strongly to avoid a collision, swerved aside—and banged into the face

of a great rock. Of what came next all I remember is a jarring shock, an uncontrolled dive forward against which instinct protested in vain, an awful sick feeling that lasted a couple of seconds, and the beginnings of what would have been a colossal headache if unconsciousness had not brought relief.

. . . . . .

Consciousness returned dimly and gradually. First of all I saw the rock on which my head was lolling; but I had no sense of unity, nor could I feel any bodily sensations except an oppressive want of breath. I twisted my neck and looked up at the sky, and somehow realised that the sun must have set. Then I noticed, quite impersonally, that a band of ragged Arabs were climbing towards me. Most of them carried rifles, and all had pistols or daggers protruding from their sashes and ammunition belts. The foremost had unsheathed a long knife, which he fingered appraisingly as he advanced at a quick walk.

CHAPTER II.—PAIN, PURGATORY, AND A PLAN.

As my senses became clearer the feeling of oppression in my chest grew more and more acute, and I had to struggle desperately for breath. Yet I did not realise that I was directly concerned in the Arabs' intentions and actions, but looked at the motley group from the detached point of view of a cinematograph spectator. They were an unkempt group, with ragged robes and dirty head-dresses and straggling beards and unfriendly eyes,—the sort of nomads who, during the lawless days of war would—and did—cheerfully kill travellers for the sake of a pair of boots, a dress, or a rifle. They had between them a strange variety of arms—guns of every size and shape, belts of close-packed ammunition, revolvers and long bone-handled pistols, and curved knives.

And the foremost Arab continued to advance, while fingering the drawn blade of his knife. He was only a few yards distant when another and older man stopped him with a shout. The man with the shining blade answered heatedly, and a general argument followed, in which most of his companions took part. At that time my knowledge of Arabic was of the slightest, and in any case I was not in a condition to grasp the meaning of their words. Yet instinct and deductions from their pantomime made me certain that they were debating some rather debateable points, namely—whether somebody should be killed and stripped, or merely stripped, or whether it would be more worth while to hand him over alive to the Turks, in return for *baksheesh*.

And again I did not regard myself as interested in the de-

liberations, nor was I the least bit afraid, being still under the spell of cinematographic detachment. When the Arabs' argument was settled beyond question by the sudden appearance on a near-by slope of a detachment of Turkish soldiers, I regarded the scene much as if it had portrayed a film sheriff, with comic sheepskin-booted posse, riding to rescue the kidnapped maiden from the brigands.

The dozen Arabs stood sullenly aside as four mounted officers arrived, followed by a body of running soldiers.

"Anglais?" said a young officer as he dismounted.

And the mental effort of asking myself if I were English brought back most of my senses and understanding, and I discovered that I was intensely uncomfortable. The struggle for breath was almost insupportable, a searing pain permeated my right thigh, and my head felt as if it were disintegrating. I tried to move, but an implacable weight held firmly everything but my head, one arm, and one leg.

"Anglais?" repeated the young officer. I tried to speak but failed, and could only nod, miserably.

The soldiers got to work behind me, and first the weight on my chest and then that on my thigh lifted. Two officers helped me to rise, and one of them felt my face.

"Not so bad. I am a doctor. I will bandage it," he said in French.

I searched to find what was not so bad, and discovered that all this while I had been seeing through the right eye only, for the left was screwed up tightly, with a swollen forehead overhanging it. The doctor let go my arm to fetch some dressing from his horse, and I promptly collapsed, because one thigh would not perform its work. I fell among pieces of the most completely wrecked aeroplane I have ever seen. After hitting the rock the machine had evidently crashed to starboard, so that I was thrown sideways over the top plane. The starboard wings were matchwood, the struts on the port side had snapped, and the fuselage was twisted into a wide curve, a corner of the rock having cut through one longeron and bent another. None of the main parts—planes, fuselage, centre-section, rudder, or elevator—was whole, and all were intermingled with bits of wire, splinters of wood, and tattered fabric. As for the engine, it had fallen clean out, and was partly buried in earth. It was the engine that had been weighing so painfully on my right thigh, while the forward end of the fuselage had pinned down my chest. I thought of burning these remains by throwing a lighted match among them suddenly, but did not do so—firstly because I had no match, and secondly, because there was nothing worth the burning. The soldiers had already taken the instruments from the dashboard, and one of them, I

noticed, had broken off the joystick to take as a souvenir.

The doctor bound up my face and helped me to mount a mule, and we left the Arabs to their scowls of disappointment at being cheated out of loot. All this while I had been exceptionally well treated by the officers and men in Turkish uniform. Not one had spoken roughly, nothing was taken from me, and even my pockets were not searched. Could it be that the Turks treated their prisoners well instead of badly? Even on the British side of the lines we heard stories of how Turkish soldiers had killed British wounded, how Turkish officers had threatened newly-taken prisoners with death if they did not give up all they possessed, and how everybody's money and most people's boots were stolen immediately they were captured; although we did not hear anything like the damnable truth of the Turks' atrocities. The mystery soon explained itself.

"Est-ce-que les Anglais viendront bientôt?" said the young officer who had first spoken.

"Qui sait?"

"Moi, je l'espère bien, parce que je suis Arménien. Nous sommes tous des Arméniens ou des Arabes."

I had been lucky enough to fall among, not Turks, but Arabs and Armenians, whose officers were, one and all, pro-British. They were a labour unit, explained the young Armenian, and their work was to make roads and tracks across the hill-country. Like all the conscript Armenians, Greeks, and Jews, and most of the Arabs, they had not been sent to the actual front, because most of them would have deserted to the British at the first opportunity. The doctor who had dressed my face was a Jew. The commandant, whom I would meet at the camp, was an Arab, and had an intense love for the British. But he would not dare pretend to show me too much friendliness, because some of the men acted as spies for the Turks.

The camp sprawled in a hollow between two hills, without any semblance of order. The men were squatting at their evening meal, in little parties, each man dipping his fingers into the large bowl that was in the centre of his group. The Arab commandant, a fat man with a good-humoured face, was in front of his tent, awaiting our arrival. He looked at me with grave curiosity on learning that I was English, and, through an interpreter, greeted me ceremoniously. He was sorry indeed, he said, for my misfortune, and he hoped my hurts were not serious. He had little enough hospitality to offer, but it would be a privilege to make me as comfortable as possible. Would I honour the officers by joining them at dinner?

Over a meal of soup, bread, rice, and raisins, I was questioned guardedly about my views on the duration of the war, the conditions of life

in that part of Palestine occupied by the British, and, above all, if the British would advance soon. Every one seemed to take it for granted that the British could advance when and where they liked. I explained that the Arabs, Syrians, and Jews were very contented and on good terms with our troops; that bread, sugar, fish, and meat were cheap and plentiful; that local inhabitants were well paid for everything they sold to the British armies; that the population was overjoyed at being freed from the Turks.

Several eyes gleamed, and most of the company looked thoughtful; but no comments were passed. Those present looked at each other with side-glances, as if distrustful and afraid to speak.

But afterwards, when we went outside the tent to drink our coffee by moonlight, the commandant took me aside and unburdened himself, while pretending to watch the Jew doctor re-bandage my face. Was it true, he asked (the Jew acting as interpreter), that the British intended to give Arabia and part of Syria to the Arabs?

"Most certainly," I replied; and added, for the benefit of the doctor, that the Jews would probably have Palestine.

Was it true that the British were friendly to the Arabs and gave their Arab prisoners all sorts of privileges not given to the Turkish prisoners?

"Most certainly."

The good-humoured face of the Arab grew hard as he began talking of the Turks' misdeeds. They had massacred many of the Syrian and Arab notables. They had starved to death half the Lebanon population. They had commandeered all the crops. They had thrown many hundreds into prison and left them there without trial. The whole of the population hated the Turks, and were only waiting for a British victory to rise up and kill the grasping officials. When the British advanced they would receive such a welcome as conquerors had never before received in Syria.

With that he began to tell me how, after he had been taken for service from his native town of Homs, the Turks had sent his family to Aleppo, and told him that if he deserted their lives would be forfeit. By merely talking to me he would be suspect. Would I be kind enough to give him my word of honour not to try to escape while in his charge? If, however, I were sent to Damascus and thought of escaping from there, I might obtain help from an Arab whose address he would give me. As I could not walk five yards, and still felt deadly sick, I promised readily enough.

The young Armenian helped me across to his tent and put me to bed. He then wrapped himself in a blanket and lay on the floor facing the entrance; for, he said, if I were left to sleep alone the men would creep in to steal my clothes and boots.

At about two o'clock in the morning, after a few hours of fitful sleep, I was woken up and asked to dress. A German staff officer, said the Armenian, had ridden over to see that I was sent away, fearing that the Arabs and Armenians might help me to escape. Outside, in the moonlight, I found a young eyeglassed lieutenant — correct, aloof, and immaculate. In atrocious French he asked if I were badly shaken, and if I thought I could ride for three hours. I did not think I could ride for three hours. He was sorry, but I really must ride for three hours. Why, then, had he troubled to ask my opinion if I could ride for three hours? He made no reply, but I heard him giving instructions to the Sanitätsunteroffizier who had come with him to have me put on a mule and, with drawn revolver, to ride behind, while a guide led the way to Army Group Headquarters.

A shambling, decrepit mule was commandeered from the Arab, and with many a groan I was helped on to its back. The Sanitätsunteroffizier mounted his pony, drew his revolver, and cocked it with an ostentatious click. An Arab guide took hold of my mule's reins. I said good-bye to the Arab and Armenian officers, and we moved off down a straggling track. The commandant had no chance to give me the address of his friend in Damascus.

About fifty yards ahead I saw what looked like a Bedouin galloping across a stretch of grass and disappear behind a mound? And then, from the camp behind us, came a startled and furious shout: "Mein Pferd! Teufel! Wo ist mein Pferd?" The Sanitätsunteroffizier motioned our guide to turn round, and we retraced our path. The young staff officer—no longer correct, aloof, and immaculate, and with eyeglass dangling unheeded in front of his tunic — was in a towering rage. He had told "one of these brutes," said he to the Sanitätsunteroffizier, to hold his horse, and he now found both the horse and the brute had disappeared. I remembered the Bedouin whom I had seen riding across the patch of grass, and was infinitely amused. It appeared that the man who held the horse had already deserted twice and been recaptured; for his third attempt, who could blame him for taking as companion a German officer's horse, since Allah had sent such a wonderful gift? And the young German raged and cursed and shouted verbal contempt for all these Asiatic "cattle," among whom it was his misfortune to live. Finally, after promising the commandant all sorts of penalties, he said he would take the best horse from the Arab officers' stable.

The Sanitätsunteroffizier and I again walked our mules along the narrow track. It was a ride that will live always vividly in my memory. The guide dragged my mule up impossible slopes, pulled it over slippery rocks which ended in an almost vertical drop of several feet, and

beat it unmercifully on the several occasions when it fell forward on to its knees. Each small jolt sent an exquisite pain through my contused thigh, and my head felt as if it were being beaten by hammers. Everything seemed unreal. The piles of heaped-up stones, so common in this country of nomad Arabs, looked like monstrous gargoyles in the half-light of the moon.

After about an hour I became light-headed again, forgot I was a prisoner, forgot I was on mule-back, and almost forgot that I existed. I lost consciousness of everything but the light of the moon, which appeared as some great white hanging sheet, from the other side of which sounded, far away and unnatural, the voice of the Unteroffizier, like the trickling of hidden water. Finally I fainted, and must have fallen from the mule, for when I recovered consciousness my head and arms were sore, and the German was arranging my bandages. Refreshed by a short drink of water, I was once more pushed on to the mule's back, and continued the purgatorial journey over the rocky hillside. It was four hours after we had started when the Unteroffizier announced that a village in a small valley some quarter of a mile ahead was Arsun, the site of the Group Headquarters.

I was taken direct to the officers' mess, where I found the eye-glassed young officer relating to two early risers—a colonel and a major—how the dirty pig-dog of an Arab had stolen his best horse. The senior officer present, a staff colonel, received me kindly enough; but a major, to whom I took an instant dislike, looked at my torn clothes and swollen face and laughed. The colonel gave me wine, and offered his sympathy. He fought, he said, side by side with the British in the Boxer War, and he had the greatest regard for the English infantryman. Finding that I had flown in the battle of the Somme, he launched into reminiscences of that epic struggle, and told me how desperately hard put were the Germans not to let their retreat degenerate into a rout. Now, however (this was the period of the whirlwind German advance towards Amiens), things were better. He believed that Hindenburg, having bled the French white, would bring about a German peace by the coming autumn. I remarked that the French were by no means bled white, and, moreover, that there were plenty of Englishmen and Americans in the world. Here the major interposed with a sneer—

"Americans! All through the war the Allies have clutched at straws and men of straw. First it was the Russians, then the blockade, then the British, and now that all these three have failed it is the Americans! I know the Americans well. They are all talk, bluff, and self-interest. They will make not the least difference to German invincibility."

And he began a long boastful account of how he had got back to Germany at the beginning of the war by outwitting the Americans and the English. In August 1914, he said, he was on special duty in Japan. He had slipped across to America, and for a time worked in the United States with Boy-ed and von Papen. Afterwards, with Dutch papers, he had shipped to Holland. When the boat was held up by a British cruiser, he had convinced the stupid examining officer that he was a Dutchman. He proceeded to draw offensive comparisons between the Germans and the English. The German nation was magnificently organised, whereas the British leaders could scarcely be more stupid. But it was not only a question of organisation. From every point of view the German was superior to the Englishman. He was braver, more intelligent, more obedient, and had a higher sense of honour. When it was a question of equal conditions the German invariably beat the Englishman. He turned to the colonel, and speaking in German, he pointed out as a proof of his contentions that I myself had been shot down by a German. Also speaking in German (for the first time since my capture), which appeared to surprise the major, I mentioned that I had been fighting with not one but four German machines, that I had chased a German two-seater twenty miles over its own territory, that the German aviators on the Palestine front invariably ran from the British unless in greatly superior force, that the proportion of machines shot down in Palestine was about five Germans to one British, and, moreover, that when a German officer had the misfortune to be captured he was treated as a gentleman, and was not made a target for uncivil taunts.

The major rang the bell, and ordered me to be taken to a tent by the cook-house.

Once more I lay down, and this time was allowed to sleep until awakened by the myriads of flies that swarmed round the cook-house while lunch was being prepared. I hung about the tent, miserably and dejectedly, for two hours. Then a lieutenant arrived, and announced that the major would be graciously pleased to accept an apology for my lack of respect. If, I replied, the major would express his regrets for having spoken offensively of the English, I would be delighted to exchange apologies with him. The lieutenant and I treated each other to punctilious salutes, and he withdrew; and that was the last I heard of the ill-mannered major.

To give the devil his due, he provided the single example of German rudeness that I met with while in captivity. It is obvious, from the stories of prisoners repatriated from Germany, that the Boche at home was often a brute and a vulgarian in his treatment of captives. But in the East his contempt for the Turks and Arabs seemed to make him

regret seeing a fellow-European in their hands. At any rate, German officers and men often arranged that British prisoners whom they met on the Turkish railways should be provided with a higher degree of comfort; and during the damnable 800-mile march of the Kut-el-Amara garrison across the desert and mountains, on starvation rations, when thousands died from the cruelty and neglect of the Turks, German and Austrian motor-lorries picked up and saved hundreds of worn-out, half-clothed Tommies who had been left to die by the roadside.

In the afternoon, after receiving some bread and coffee, I was sent away on pony-back, with a German cavalryman as escort. This trooper was friendly and garrulous. He pronounced himself a Social Democrat and an Internationalist. He was a good German, he claimed, and had fought for Germany since 1914; but he had neither hatred nor contempt for Germany's enemies. It was the Ministers, the politicians, the professors, the journalists, and the general staffs who had manufactured hatred. The German civilians and non-combatant troops were blinded by racial feeling, but, according to my Social Democrat guard, not so the fighting man. He liked and respected many of his officers, especially the colonel whom I had met; but after the war the proletariat would see that they, and the class they represented, discarded their arrogance and ascendancy. And, either ignorant or unmindful of Germany's crimes, this half-baked idealist looked forward with confidence to a wonderful peace that would send him back to his trade of printing, and would bring about an immediate heart-to-heart reconciliation of Germany and the rest of the world.

With such debating-society talk my mind was distracted from the dull ache in my thigh and the spasmodic pains that came with every jolt from the pony. The heat was intense on my uncovered head, and the flies collected in their hundreds each time we halted to allow a party of ragged Arabs, mounted on camels or donkeys, to pass round some bend of the track ahead of us.

The country was fairly level, however, and it was not long before we reached my next stage—a German field hospital, corresponding approximately to the British casualty clearing station. There my face and thigh were dressed, and for the first time since capture I could indulge in the glorious luxury of a wash. The doctor in charge complained that the hospital had been machine-gunned by a British aeroplane, but he seemed surprised when I told him that the red cross painted on the *side* of the building could not be seen by an aviator. He agreed to mark a large red cross on the ground.

My destination, it appeared, was the Austrian hospital at Tul-keran, whither I was forwarded by motor-ambulance, with several wounded Turks. It proved to be a dirty in-

sanitary building, such as we should scarcely have used as a billet; but at all events it provided a much-needed place of rest.

Most ex-prisoners of war will agree that the time when one is first left alone for any length of time, after capture, is a first-class substitute for purgatory. All at once the realisation that one is cut off and under most galling restraint becomes vivid and intense. The thought of irrevocable separation from one's fighting companions, and of what they must now be doing, leaves one utterly miserable and dejected. So it was with me. Fifteen miles to the south our Nieuports would be waiting for the next tip-and-run call to flight. It would, perhaps, be the turn of Daddy and the Babe, who would hang around the hangars, while the rest trooped across to tea in the orange grove. Soon all of them would be driving along the wired-over, sandy road to the coast.

And here was I, herded with unclean Turks in a crowded unclean room, while the hot sun streamed through the window and made one glad to get protection from it by hiding under an unclean blanket.

Only fifteen miles to the south. And the coast was fifteen miles to the east. The coast? Why, my friend Seeward, after he was forced to land in the sea, had effected a marvellous escape by hiding among the sand-dunes during the daytime, and during the night alternately swimming, walking, and rolling through the shallow water on the fringe of the sands, until he had passed the Turkish trench-line. Only fifteen miles; and from aerial observation I knew that the country between Tul-keran and the sea was more or less flat.

I resolved that when my leg allowed me to walk, I would somehow escape from the hospital early one night, try to reach the shore before dawn, hide during the day following, and then run or swim to the lines.

(To be continued.)

A COMPANY OF TANKS.

BY MAJOR W. H. L. WATSON, D.C.M.,
Author of 'Adventures of a Despatch Rider.'

CHAPTER IV.—THE FIRST BATTLE OF BULLECOURT.

(April 11, 1917.)

LATER in the morning we heard from Jumbo, who had returned from Noreuil, the full history of the weary trek in the blizzard.

The tanks had left Mory Copse at 8 P.M. under the guidance of Wyatt. In the original plan of operations it had been arranged that Wyatt's section should attack from Noreuil and the remaining sections from Ecoust. So Wyatt was the only section commander who had reconnoitred the Noreuil route.

No tape had been laid. We had not wished to decorate the downs with broad white tape before the afternoon of the day on which the tanks would move forward. On the other hand, we had not calculated on such a brief interval between the receipt of orders and the start of the tanks. An attempt to lay tape in front of the tanks was soon abandoned: the drivers could not see it, and Wyatt was guiding them as well as he could.

Soon after they had set out the blizzard came sweeping over the downs, blocking out landmarks and obscuring lamps. The drivers could not always see the officers who were leading their tanks on foot. Each tank commander, blinded and breathless, found it barely possible to follow the tank in front. The pace was reduced to a mere crawl in order to keep the convoy together.

Though Wyatt never lost his way, he wisely proceeded with the utmost caution, checking his route again and again. Our line at the time consisted of scattered posts—there were no trenches—and on such a night it would have been easy enough to lead the whole company of tanks straight into the German wire.

The tanks came down into the valley that runs from Vaulx-Vraucourt to Noreuil two miles above Noreuil. The crews were dead-tired, but they would have gone forward willingly if they could have arrived in time. Dawn was breaking. The Australians were withdrawn at the last moment from the Railway Embankment, where they had been lying out all night in readiness, and the attack was postponed.

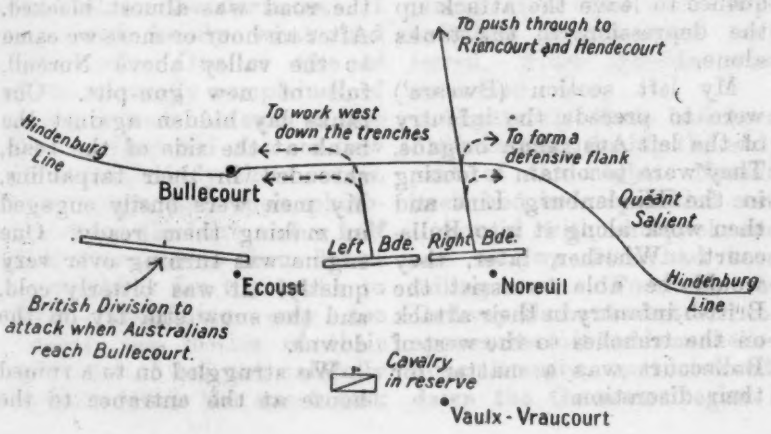
The blizzard confounded many that night. The colonel told me later he had heard that a whole cavalry brigade had spent most of the night wandering over the downs, hopelessly lost. I cannot vouch for the story myself.

In the afternoon (April 10)

I was called to a conference at the headquarters of the Australian Division which was housed in a camp of Armstrong huts, ten minutes' walk down the Bapaume road. General Birdwood was there, Major-General Holmes, who commanded the Division with which we were to operate, Brigadier-General Rosenthal, commanding the artillery of the Corps, sundry staff officers, the colonel, and myself.

The conference first discussed the situation on the front of the Third Army. The initial advance had been completely successful, but the German forces were far from defeat, and were continuing to offer a most determined and skilful resistance. We certainly had not broken through yet. The battle, however, was still in its earliest stages; the situation had not crystallised; there was still hope that the enormous pressure of our offensive might cause the enemy line to crumble and disappear. It had been decided, in consequence, to proceed with the postponed attack on Bullecourt, but to overhaul the arrangements which had been improvised to meet an emergency. The original idea of a stealthy and silent attack, led by tanks and supported by a bombardment rather than a barrage, was abandoned after some discussion, and the conference agreed to return to more classical methods.

Two infantry brigades would attack and pierce the Hindenburg Line on the front immediately to the east of Bullecourt. The attack was to be led by tanks under cover of a barrage and a heavy bombardment. Emphasis was laid on the necessity for strong counter-battery work. The right attacking brigade would form a defensive flank in the direction of Quéant, and at the same time endeavour to press through to Riencourt and Hendecourt. The left brigade would work its way down the German trenches into Bullecourt itself. Immediately the village was reached, the British Division on the left would extend the front of the attack westwards.



My tanks were detailed to co-operate very closely with the infantry. The right section (Wyatt's) were given three duties: first, to parade up and down the German wire immediately to the right of the front of the attack; second, to remain with the infantry in the Hindenburg Line until the trenches had been successfully "blocked" and the defensive flank secured; third, to accompany the infantry in their advance on Riencourt and Hendecourt.

The centre section (Field's) were required to advance between the two brigades and plunge into the Hindenburg Line. This movement was made necessary by the decision to attack not on a continuous front but up two slight spurs or shoulders. The Hindenburg Line itself lay just beyond the crest of a slope, and these almost imperceptible shoulders ran out from the main slope at right angles to the line. It was thought that the depression between them would be swept by machine-gun fire, and it was decided in consequence to leave the attack up the depression to the tanks alone.

My left section (Swears') were to precede the infantry of the left Australian brigade. They were to obtain a footing in the Hindenburg Line and then work along it into Bullecourt. Whether, later, they would be able to assist the British infantry in their attack on the trenches to the west of Bullecourt was a matter for their discretion.

The atmosphere of the conference was cheerless. It is a little melancholy to revive and rebuild the plan of an attack which has been postponed very literally at the last moment. The conference was an anti-climax. For days and nights we had been completing our preparations. The supreme moment came, and after hours of acute tension passed without result. Then again, tired and without spirit, we drew up fresh plans. War is never romantic because emergencies, which might be adventures, come only when the soldier is stale and tired.

We hurried back to the camp at Behagnies and composed fresh orders, while Jumbo re-marked his maps and re-shuffled his aeroplane photographs. At dusk Jumbo and I started out in the car for Noreuil, but at Vaulx-Vraucourt we decided to leave the car on account of the pot-holes in the road. The roads were heavy with mud and slush and we were far from fresh. We passed Australians coming up and much transport—in places the road was almost blocked. After an hour or more we came to the valley above Noreuil, full of new gun-pits. Our tanks lay hidden against the bank at the side of the road, shrouded in their tarpaulins. My men were busily engaged in making them ready. One engine was turning over very quietly. It was bitterly cold, and the snow still lay on the downs.

We struggled on to a ruined house at the entrance to the

village. One room or shed—it may have been a shrine—constructed strongly of bricks, still stood in the middle of the wreckage. This my officers had made their headquarters. I gave instructions for all the officers to be collected, and in the meantime walked through the street to one of the two brigade headquarters in the village.

This brigade was fortunate in its choice, for it lay safe and snug in the bowels of the earth. An old brewery or factory possessed whole storeys of cellars, and the brigade office was three storeys down.

Haigh and Swears were discussing operations with the brigadier. They were all under the illusion that the postponed attack would take place as originally planned, and bitter was the disappointment when I told them that the orders had been changed. I gave the general and his brigade-major a rough outline of the new scheme, and took Swears and Haigh back with me to the ruins.

All my officers were assembled in the darkness. I explained briefly what had happened. One or two of them naturally complained of changes made at such a late hour. They did not see how they could study their orders, their maps, and their photographs in the hour and a half that remained to them before it was time for the tanks to start. Realising only too vividly the justice of their grievance, I set out carefully and in detail the exact task of each tank. When I had finished, we discussed one or two points, and then my officers went to their tanks, and I returned to brigade headquarters, so that I might be in touch with the colonel and the Division should anything untoward happen before zero.

The night passed with slow feet, while my tanks were crawling forward over the snow. The brigade-major rewrote his orders. Officers and orderlies came in and out of the cellar. We had some tea, and the general lay down for some sleep. There was a rumour that one of the tanks had become ditched in climbing out of the road. I went out to investigate, and learned that Morris's tank had been slightly delayed. It was, unfortunately, a clear cold night.

When I returned to the cellar the brigade staff were making ready for the battle. Pads of army signal forms were placed conveniently to hand. The war diary was lying open with a pencil beside it and the carbons adjusted. The wires forward to battalion headquarters were tested. Fresh orderlies were awakened.

Apparently there had been little shelling during the early part of the night. Noreuil itself had been sprinkled continuously with shrapnel, and one or two 5·9's had been sailing over. Forward, the Railway Embankment and the approaches to it had been shelled intermittently, and towards dawn the Germans began a

mild bombardment, but nothing was reported to show that the enemy had heard our tanks or realised our intentions.

I received messages from Haigh that all my tanks were in position, or just coming into position, beyond the Railway Embankment. Zero hour was immediately before sunrise, and as the minutes filed by I wondered idly whether, deep down in the earth, we should hear the barrage. I was desperately anxious that the tanks should prove an overwhelming success. It was impossible not to imagine what might happen to the infantry if the tanks were knocked out early in the battle. Yet I could not help feeling that this day we should make our name.

We looked at our watches —two minutes to go. We stared at the minute-hands. Suddenly there was a whistling and rustling in the distance, and a succession of little thumps, like a dog that hits the floor when it scratches itself. The barrage had opened. Constraint vanished, and we lit pipes and cigarettes. You would have thought that the battle was over. We had not blown out our matches when there was a reverberating crash overhead. Two could play at this game of noises.

Few reports arrive during the first forty minutes of a battle. Everybody is too busy fighting. Usually the earliest news comes from wounded men, and naturally their experiences are limited. Brigade Headquarters are, as a rule, at least an hour behind the battle. You cannot often stand on a hill and watch the ebb and flow of the fight in the old magnificent way.

At last the reports began to dribble in and the staff settled down to their work. There were a good few casualties before the German wire was reached. The enemy barrage came down, hot and strong, a few minutes after zero. . . . Fighting hard in the Hindenburg trenches, but few tanks to be seen. . . . The enemy are still holding on to certain portions of the line. . . . The fighting is very severe. . . . Heavy counter-attacks from the sunken road at L. 6 b. 5.2. The news is a medley of scraps.

Soon the brigadier is called upon to act. One company want a protective barrage put down in front of them, but from another message it seems probable that there are Australians out in front. The brigadier must decide.

One battalion asks to be reinforced from the reserve battalion. Is it time for the reserve to be thrown into the battle? The brigadier must decide.

They have run short of bombs. An urgent message for fresh supplies comes through, and the staff captain hurries out to make additional arrangements.

There is little news of the tanks. One reports states that no tanks have been seen, another that a tank helped to clear up a machine-gun post, a third that a tank is burning.

At last R., one of my tank commanders, bursts in. He is grimy, red-eyed, and nervous.

"Practically all the tanks have been knocked out, sir!" he reported in a hard excited voice.

Before answering I glanced rapidly round the cellar. These Australians had been told to rely on tanks. Without tanks many casualties were certain and victory was improbable. Their hopes were shattered as well as mine, if this report were true. Not an Australian turned a hair. Each man went on with his job.

I asked R. a few questions. The brigade-major was listening sympathetically. I made a written note, sent off a wire to the colonel, and climbed into the open air.

It was a bright and sunny morning, with a clear sky and a cool invigorating breeze. A bunch of Australians were joking over their breakfasts. The streets of the village were empty with the exception of a "runner," who was hurrying down the road. The guns were hard at it. From the valley behind the village came the quick cracks of the 18-pdrs., the little thuds of the light howitzers, the ear-splitting crashes of the 60-pdrs., and, very occasionally, the shuddering thumps of the heavies. The air rustled and whined with shells. Then, as we hesitated, came the loud murmur, the roar, the overwhelming rush of a 5·9, like the tearing of a giant newspaper, and the building shook and rattled as a huge cloud of black smoke came suddenly into being one hundred yards away, and bricks and bits of metal came pattering down or swishing past.

The enemy was kind. He was only throwing an occasional shell into the village, and we walked down the street comparatively calm.

When we came to the brick shelter at the farther end of the village we realised that our rendezvous had been most damnably ill-chosen. Fifty yards to the west the Germans, before their retirement, had blown a large crater where the road from Ecoust joins the road from Vaulx-Vraucourt, and now they were shelling it persistently. A stretcher party had just been caught. They lay in a confused heap halfway down the side of the crater. And a few yards away a field-howitzer battery in action was being shelled with care and accuracy.

We sat for a time in this noisy and unpleasant spot. One by one officers came in to report. Then we walked up the sunken road towards the dressing station. When I had the outline of the story I made my way back to the brigade headquarters in the cellar, and sent off a long wire. My return to the brick shelter was, for reasons that at the time seemed almost too obvious, both hasty and undignified. Further reports came in, and when we decided to move outside the village and collect the men by the bank where the tanks had sheltered a few hours

before, the story was tolerably complete.

All the tanks, except Morris's, had arrived without incident at the Railway Embankment. Morris ditched at the bank and was a little late. Haigh and Jumbo had gone on ahead of the tanks. They crawled out beyond the Embankment into No Man's Land and marked out the starting-line. It was not too pleasant a job. The enemy machine-guns were active right through the night, and the neighbourhood of the Embankment was shelled intermittently. Towards dawn this intermittent shelling became almost a bombardment, and it was feared that the tanks had been heard.

Skinner's tank failed on the Embankment. The remainder crossed it successfully and lined up for the attack just before zero. By this time the shelling had become severe. The crews waited inside their tanks, wondering dully if they would be hit before they started. Already they were dead-tired, for they had had little sleep since their long painful trek of the night before.

Suddenly our bombardment began—it was more of a bombardment than a barrage—and the tanks crawled away into the darkness, followed closely by little bunches of Australians.

On the extreme right Morris and Puttock of Wyatt's section were met by tremendous machine-gun fire at the wire of the Hindenburg Line. They swung to the right, as they had been ordered, and glided along in front of the wire, sweeping the parapet with their fire. They received as good as they gave. Serious clutch trouble developed in Puttock's tank. It was impossible to stop since now the German guns were following them. A brave runner carried the news to Wyatt at the Embankment. The tanks continued their course, though Puttock's tank was barely moving, and by luck and good driving they returned to the railway, having kept the enemy most fully occupied in a quarter where he might have been uncommonly troublesome.

Morris passed a line to Skinner and towed him over the Embankment. They both started for Bullecourt. Puttock pushed on back towards Noreuil. His clutch was slipping badly, and the shells were falling ominously near. He withdrew his crew from the tank into a trench, and a little later the tank was hit and hit again.

Of the remaining two tanks in this section we could hear nothing. Davies and Clarkson had disappeared. Perhaps they had gone through to Hendecourt. Yet the infantry of the right brigade, according to the reports we had received, were fighting most desperately to retain a precarious hold on the trenches they had entered.

In the centre Field's section of three tanks were stopped by the determined and accurate fire of forward field-guns before they entered the German trenches. The tanks were silhouetted against the snow,

and the enemy gunners did not miss.

The first tank was hit in the track before it was well under way. The tank was evacuated, and in the dawning light it was hit again before the track could be repaired.

Money's tank reached the German wire. His men must have missed their gears. For less than a minute the tank was motionless, then she burst into flames. A shell had exploded the petrol tanks, which in the old Mark I. were placed forward on either side of the officer's and driver's seats. A sergeant and two men escaped. Money, best of good fellows, must have been killed instantaneously by the shell.

Bernstein's tank was within reach of the German trenches when a shell hit the cab, decapitated the driver, and exploded in the body of the tank. The corporal was wounded in the arm, and Bernstein was stunned and temporarily blinded. The tank was filled with fumes. As the crew were crawling out, a second shell hit the tank on the roof. The men under the wounded corporal began stolidly to salve the tank's equipment, while Bernstein, scarcely knowing where he was, staggered back to the Embankment. He was packed off to a dressing station, and an orderly was sent to recall the crew and found them still working under deadly fire.

Swears' section of four tanks on the left were slightly more fortunate.

Birkett went forward at top speed, and, escaping the shells, entered the German trenches, where his guns did great execution. The tank worked down the trenches towards Bullecourt, followed by the Australians. She was hit twice, and all the crew were wounded, but Birkett went on fighting grimly until his ammunition was exhausted and he himself was badly wounded in the leg. Then at last he turned back, followed industriously by the German gunners. Near the Embankment he stopped the tank to take his bearings. As he was climbing out, a shell burst against the side of the tank and wounded him again in the leg. The tank was evacuated. The crew salved what they could, and, helping each other, for they were all wounded, they made their way back painfully to the Embankment. Birkett was brought back on a stretcher, and wounded a third time as he lay in the sunken road outside the dressing station. His tank was hit again and again. Finally it took fire, and was burnt out.

Skinner, after his tank had been towed over the Railway Embankment by Morris, made straight for Bullecourt, thinking that as the battle had now been in progress for more than two hours the Australians must have fought their way down the trenches. Immediately he entered the village machine-guns played upon his tank, and several of his crew were slightly wounded by the little flakes of metal that fly about inside a Mk. I. tank

when it is subjected to really concentrated machine-gun fire. No Australians could be seen. Suddenly he came right to the edge of an enormous crater, and as suddenly stopped. He tried to reverse, but he could not change gear. The tank was absolutely motionless. He held out for some time, and then the Germans brought up a gun and began to shell the tank. Against field-guns in houses he was defenceless so long as his tank could not move. His ammunition was nearly exhausted. There were no signs of the Australians or of British troops. He decided quite properly to withdraw. With great skill he evacuated his crew, taking his guns with him and the little ammunition that remained. Slowly and carefully they worked their way back, and reached the Railway Embankment without further casualty.

The fourth tank of this section was hit on the roof just as it was coming into action. The engine stopped in sympathy, and the tank commander withdrew his crew from the tank.

Swears, the section commander, left the Railway Embankment, and with the utmost gallantry went forward into Bullecourt to look for Skinner. He never came back.

Such were the cheerful reports that I received in my little brick shelter by the cross-roads. Of my eleven tanks nine had received direct hits, and two were missing. The infantry were in no better plight. From all accounts the Australians were holding with the greatest difficulty the trenches they had entered. Between the two brigades the Germans were clinging fiercely to their old line. Counter-attack after counter-attack came smashing against the Australians from Bullecourt and its sunken roads, from Lagnicourt and along the trenches from the Quéant salient. The Australians were indeed hard put to it.

While we were sorrowfully debating what would happen, we heard the noise of a tank's engines. We ran out, and saw to our wonder a tank coming down the sunken road. It was the fourth tank of Swears' section, which had been evacuated after a shell had blown a large hole in its roof.

When the crew had left the tank and were well on their way to Noreuil, the tank corporal remembered that he had left his "Primus" stove behind. It was a valuable stove, and he did not wish to lose it. So he started back with a comrade, and later they were joined by a third man. Their officer had left to look for me and ask for orders. They reached the tank—the German gunners were doing their very best to hit it again—and desperately eager not to abandon it outright, they tried to start the engine. To their immense surprise it fired, and, despite the German gunners, the three of them brought the tank and the "Primus" stove safe into Noreuil. The corporal's name was Hay-

ward. He was one of Hammond's men.

We had left the brick shelter and were collecting the men on the road outside Noreuil, when the colonel rode up and gave us news of Davies and Clarkson. Our aeroplanes had seen two tanks crawling over the open country beyond the Hindenburg trenches to Riencourt, followed by four or five hundred cheering Australians. Through Riencourt they swept, and on to the large village of Hendecourt five miles beyond the trenches. They entered the village, still followed by the Australians. . . .

What happened to them afterwards cannot be known until the battlefield is searched and all the prisoners who return have been questioned. The tanks and the Australians never came back. The tanks may have been knocked out by field-guns. They may have run short of petrol. They may have become "ditched." Knowing Davies and Clarkson, I am certain they fought to the last—and the tanks which later were paraded through Berlin were not my tanks. . . .

We rallied fifty-two officers and men out of the one hundred and three who had left Mory or Behagnies for the battle. Two men were detailed to guard our dump outside Noreuil, the rescued tank started for Mory, and the remaining officers and men marched wearily to Vaulx-Vraucourt, where lorries and a car were awaiting them.

I walked up to the Railway Embankment, but seeing no signs of any of my men or of Davies' or Clarkson's tanks, returned to Noreuil and paid a farewell visit to the two brigadiers, of whom one told me with natural emphasis that tanks were "no damned use." Then with Skinner and Jumbo I tramped up the valley towards Vraucourt through the midst of numerous field-guns. We had passed the guns when the enemy began to shell the crowded valley with heavy stuff, directed by an aeroplane that kept steady and unwinking watch on our doings.

Just outside Vaulx-Vraucourt we rested on a sunny slope and looked across the valley at our one surviving tank trekking back to Mory. Suddenly a "5·9" burst near it. The enemy were searching for guns. Then to our dismay a second shell burst at the tail of the tank. The tank stopped, and in a moment the crew were scattering for safety. A third shell burst within a few yards of the tank. The shooting seemed too accurate to be unintentional, and we cursed the aeroplane that was circling overhead.

There was nothing we could do. The disabled tank was two miles away. We knew that when the shelling stopped the crew would return and inspect the damage. So, sick at heart, we tramped on to Vaulx-Vraucourt, passing a reserve brigade coming up hastily, and a dressing station to which a ghastly stream of stretchers was flowing.

We met the car a mile beyond the village, and drove

back sadly to Behagnies. When we came to the camp, it was ten o'clock in the morning. . . .

The enemy held the Australians stoutly. We never reached Bullecourt, and soon it became only too clear that it would be difficult enough to retain the trenches we had entered. The position was nearly desperate. The right brigade had won some trenches, and the left brigade had won some trenches. Between the two brigades the enemy had never been dislodged. And he continued to counter-attack with skill and fury down the trenches on the flanks—from the sunken roads by Bullecourt and up the communication trenches from the north. In the intervals his artillery pounded away with solid determination. Bombs and ammunition were running very short, and to get further supplies forward was terribly expensive work, for all the approaches to the trenches which the Australians had won were enfiladed by machine-gun fire. Battalions of the reserve brigade were thrown in too late, for we had bitten off more than we could chew; the Germans realised this hard fact, and redoubled their efforts. The Australians sullenly retired. The attack had failed.

A few days later the Germans replied by a surprise attack on the Australian line from Noreuil to Lagnicourt. At first they succeeded and broke through to the guns; but the Australians soon rallied, and by a succession of fierce little counter-attacks drove the enemy with great skill back on to the deep wire in front of the Hindenburg Line. There was no escape. Behind the Germans were belts of wire quite impenetrable, and in front of them were the Australians. It was a cool revengeful massacre. The Germans, screaming for mercy, were deliberately and scientifically killed.

Two of my men, who had been left to guard our dump of supplies at Noreuil, took part in this battle of Lagnicourt. Close by the dump was a battery of field howitzers. The Germans had broken through to Noreuil, and the howitzers were firing over the sights; but first one howitzer and then another became silent as the gunners fell. My two men had been using rifles. When they saw what was happening they dashed forward to the howitzers, and turning their knowledge of the tank 6-pdr. gun to account, they helped to serve the howitzers until some infantry came up and drove back the enemy. Then my men went back to their dump, which had escaped, and remained there on guard until they were relieved on the following day.

The first battle of Bullecourt was a minor disaster. Our attack was a failure, in which the three brigades of infantry engaged lost very heavily indeed; and the officers and men lost, seasoned Australian troops who had fought at

Gallipoli, could never be replaced. The company of tanks had been, apparently, nothing but a broken reed. For many months after the Australians distrusted tanks, and it was not until the battle of Amiens, sixteen months later, that the Division engaged at Bullecourt were fully converted. It was a disaster that the Australians attributed to the tanks. The tanks had failed them—the tanks "had let them down."

The Australians, in the bitterness of their losses, looked for scapegoats and found them in my tanks, but my tanks were not to blame. I have heard a lecturer say that to attack the Hindenburg Line on a front of fifteen hundred yards without support on either flank was rash. And it must not be forgotten that the attack ought to have been, and in actual fact was, expected. The artillery support was very far from overwhelming, and the barrage, coming down at zero, gave away the attack before my tanks could cross the wide No Man's Land and reach the German trenches.

What chances of success the attack possessed were destroyed by the snow on the ground, the decision to leave the centre of the attack to the tanks alone, the late arrival of the reserve brigade, and the shortage of bombs and ammunition in the firing line. These unhappy circumstances fitted into each other. If the snow had not made clear targets of the tanks, the tanks by themselves might have driven the enemy out of their trenches in the centre of the attack. If the first stages of the attack had been completely successful, the reserve brigade might not have been required. If the Australians had broken through the trench system on the left and in the centre, as they broke through on the left of the right brigade, bombs would not have been necessary.

It is difficult to estimate the value of tanks in a battle. The Australians naturally contended that without tanks they might have entered the Hindenburg Line. I am fully prepared to admit that the Australians are capable of performing any feat, for as storm troops they are surpassed by none. It is, however, undeniable that my tanks disturbed and disconcerted the enemy. We know from a report captured later that the enemy fire was concentrated on the tanks, and the German Higher Command instanced this battle as an operation in which the tanks compelled the enemy to neglect the advancing infantry. The action of the tanks was not entirely negative. On the right flank of the right brigade, a weak and dangerous spot, the tanks enabled the Australians to form successfully a defensive flank.

The most interesting result of the employment of tanks was the break-through to Riencourt and Hendecourt by Davies' and Clarkson's tanks, and the Australians who

followed them. With their flanks in the air, and in the face of the sturdiest opposition, half a section of tanks and about half a battalion of infantry broke through the strongest field-works in France and captured two villages, the second of which was nearly five miles behind the German line. This break-through was the direct forefather of the break-through at Cambrai. My men, tired and half-trained, had done their best. When General Elles was told the story of the battle, he said, "This is the best thing that tanks have done yet."

The company received two messages of congratulation. The first was from General Gough—

> "The Army Commander is very pleased with the gallantry and skill displayed by your company in the attack to-day, and the fact that the objectives were subsequently lost does not detract from the success of the tanks."

The second was from General Elles—

> "The General Officer Commanding Heavy Branch M.G.C. wishes to convey to all ranks of the company under your command his heartiest thanks and appreciation of the manner in which they carried out their tasks during the recent operations, and furthermore for the gallantry shown by all tank commanders and tank crews in action."

The company gained two Military Crosses, one D.C.M., and three Military Medals in the first Battle of Bullecourt.

(To be continued.)

THE ABERRATION OF A SCHOLAR.

THERE has never been a more strangely fantastic fashion in literary criticism than that which would strip from Shakespeare the glory of his works. Certain ingenious persons, dissatisfied with the poet's brow, are intent to find another which seems to them more apt for the bays. It does not matter much whose brow it is, so long as it is not Shakespeare's. Some there are who would seek the author of "Hamlet" in the Inns of Court. Others, equally naïve, ransack the peerage for a suitable candidate. There was a time when Roger the 5th Earl of Rutland was a hot favourite, and the fact that he was but fifteen when "Love's Labour's Lost" was written, did not diminish the odds laid upon him. To-day, William, the 6th Earl of Derby, leads by several lengths, and all the fanatics, led by M. Abel Lefranc,[1] are crying with one accord, "On, Stanley, on!" And we are only upon the threshold of research. There are still many unexplored corners in Burke's 'Peerage,' and the wreath of honour may be transferred to another head any day.

By a quick transition scepticism passes to contempt. Those who begin by doubting Shakespeare's claim to his own works commonly end by despising him for a pestilent fellow. In their eyes and on their tongues he is no longer the "sweet swan of Avon"; he is "the man of Stratford." And they who will not for a whim give up the well-established faith of centuries are denounced as "Stratfordians." Stratfordians! A name of honour, truly, since it is shared with Ben Jonson and Gabriel Harvey, with Milton and Sir John Suckling, with Davies of Hereford and countless other poets and wise men. And when M. Abel Lefranc pretends with satisfaction that "there is not unanimity in the camp of the Stratfordians," thus hinting at a still living conspiracy, he carries the jargon of fanaticism as far as it will go.

The blunder of these misguided critics proceeds from the vast assumption that they can tell from his works how and where a poet should be born, how educated, in what circles he should live, what friends he should buckle to his heart. They do not think much of Stratford-on-Avon as a cradle of poetry. They speak of it with a kind of animosity, and I should not be surprised if one day they joined their forces and razed it to the ground. They approve as little of Shakespeare's father as of Shakespeare's character.

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[1] Sous le Masque de "William Shakespeare," William Stanley, vie Comte de Derby. Paris: Payot et Cie.

And they presume to assert that such a man, as they without warrant picture Shakespeare to have been, was incapable of writing his own plays. Of course, it is easy enough to prove a man a fool if you strip him of all his wisdom and all his poesy. That is not the worst of these critics. Far worse is it to claim, as they claim, the right to interpret the workings of genius, to say that thus and thus only shall the divine spark be lit. Once upon a time two professors were walking along the road when a bird flew up over their heads. "What bird is that?" asked the one. "A magpie," said the other. "It's not my idea of a magpie," objected the one. "It's God's idea of a magpie," retorted the other. And M. Abel Lefranc does not like God's idea of Shakespeare. He thinks his own idea, the mere hazard of a guess, preferable to God's.

To try to measure genius by the ell or weigh it by the pound must always be a waste of time; for it is the habit of genius to surprise by its waywardness and its partiality. It is no respecter of persons, loving the peer no better than the peasant. It lodges happily in the unlikeliest breast, and if it make but rare and furtive sojourns among men, it does not choose its abode in accord with the established laws of the pedants. To look, then, for a solemn reasonableness in the advent of genius, to redistribute the works of well-known authors among those whom lawyers and professors deem capable of producing them, is to make an idle sport of literary history. That Shakespeare should have been born at Stratford-on-Avon of humble parentage is in no sense what Paley called "contrary to experience." Few of Shakespeare's colleagues were of known or distinguished lineage. Marlowe, the son of a cobbler; Ben Jonson, the stepson of a bricklayer, were his equals in birth, as they were his honourable rivals in the art of drama. And the attempt to thrust him into the English aristocracy, in defiance of the clearly ascertained facts, would have needed no protest had the attempt not been made by a professor like M. Abel Lefranc, whose sad book can be described only as the aberration of a scholar.

M. Lefranc complains that he knows very little about Shakespeare, and of the little which he has discovered he disapproves. He speaks of the "man of Stratford" always in terms of an angry scorn. He dislikes everything about him. The portrait of Droeshout inspires him to disgust. "This face of wood, this veritable actor's mask," thus he calls it. If the portrait be defective, surely it is the draughtsman's fault, not the sitter's; and some there are who have found much to admire in "the actor's mask." Ben Jonson praised the figure, "wherein the graver had a strife with Nature to outdo the life," and Stephane Mallarmé, once confronted with the poet's image, exclaimed: "Quelle sécurité!" But even if the famous por-

trait were as ugly as the face of an Easter Island god, and yet true to life, it would not impair Shakespeare's claim to be the author of his own works. It is as unsound a principle to judge the authenticity of a poet by his features as to insist that aristocracy of mind and aristocracy of descent are necessarily inseparable.

But in M. Abel Lefranc's view nothing that "the man of Stratford" did was right. He pours contempt upon his spelling and his handwriting, forgetting that the Italian hand had not reached Stratford in Shakespeare's day, and that orthography was not sedulously cultivated in the age of Elizabeth. There were as many ways of spelling Ralegh's name as Shakespeare's. Moreover, M. Lefranc makes merry over the poet's thrift and love of gain. He finds it reprehensible that wealth came to him, as though a proper regard for comfort and security were a slur upon the good name of genius. Yet he errs shamefully who would apply the method of Procrustes to literary history, who would cut and clip poets to suit his own pattern, or dismiss them summarily from the fount of Helicon. In truth, all such arguments are wholly irrelevant. We can say no more than that some poets have saved money, some have squandered it. Milton's immaculate character casts no darker shadow upon the splendour of his verse than does the happy carelessness of Burns. In our time it pleased Tennyson to amass a fortune and to found a family. Shall we, therefore, say that he proved himself no poet, because he patiently considered how best the works, which delighted others, might bring profit to himself? The truth is that this confusion of the man with his work is labour lost. None can explain the strange workings of nature, and when M. Abel Lefranc demands "a necessary concordance between life and letters," he demands what his profound studies must have shown him to be impossible. He thinks that the time has come for "a solution, clear, evident, and in conformity with the general laws which preside over the search for truth and the knowledge of human psychology." And he leaves out of the account the gamble of life—the supreme master of all. For one thing is certain: no knowledge of human psychology will ever explain how Keats came out of a livery stable, or—greater marvel still—why Shelley, that spirit of air and fire, was the son of a Whiggish country squire.

M. Abel Lefranc seems to think that he who drives fat oxen should himself be fat. The author of Shakespeare's plays wrote of the Court, and therefore it is as plain as the nose upon the Earl of Derby's face that he was a courtier. If you will not concede that point, then "Love's Labour's Lost" will be for ever unintelligible. It is a pleasant theory, wholly unsupported by facts. If we accepted it for gospel, then should we be compelled to

raise the most of the Elizabethan dramatists to the throne or the peerage. He who hides beneath the mask of Marlowe must needs be an Eastern potentate. Webster and Tourneur, Massinger and Middleton are dummies all, in whose shadow are concealed the gracious figures of Dukes and Barons and belted Earls. And even if this view of life and letters were not ridiculous, it would be applied most dangerously to Shakespeare. For Shakespeare is universal in sympathy. He visits with impartiality the palace and the cabin. He knows the tavern and the hedgerow; criminals, and bawds and clowns keep no secrets from him. He envisages dukes and princes with the understanding of an intimate. Was he, then, not a man, but a syndicate? Did one brain invent Falstaff and another Prince Hal? Is "Measure for Measure" the production of some great co-operative stores, of which one department supplied the Duke and Escalus and Isabella, while another furnished forth Abhorson and Barnardine and Mistress Overdone? But, indeed, they who would find "a perfect concordance between life and letters" forget also the poet's power of divination. The great poet knows all things intuitively; he knows also the terms which shall express them. Especially is Shakespeare's knowledge wide and comprehensive, like the ocean or the environing air. And as he understood far more than any other man, so he had far more words at his command to set forth what he understood. In brief, he was a poet of genius, whom one may wonder at with pious gratitude; and none of his perfections shall persuade us to accept the argument of M. Abel Lefranc: the author of Shakespeare's plays was a miracle, therefore he was the sixth Earl of Derby! This, truly, is inventing a greater miracle to explain the less.

As I have said, M. Abel Lefranc bitterly disapproves of whatever he has been able to find out about Shakespeare. He complains yet more bitterly that very little has been found out. He asserts that none of the references to Shakespeare, save one only — a burlesque — throws any light upon his character, sentiments, or ideas. He declares dogmatically that in an age of friendship he did not possess a friend, forgetting, in the first place, that Ben Jonson "lov'd the man," and in the second, that our scanty knowledge of Shakespeare does not enable us to prove a negative. "A silence so complete," says M. Abel Lefranc, "is impressive." Why is it impressive? Rather would it be impressive were it more often broken. That which M. Abel Lefranc holds for a proof that Shakespeare was somebody else might be alleged to show that no man of the age wrote what was ascribed to him. A mist of secrecy envelopes them all. We know nothing of Webster, nothing of Cyril Tourneur, nothing of Heywood, nothing of Middleton, nothing of Mar-

lowe, except that he had a quarrel with "a bawdy serving-man," and died, "slain by ffrancis Archer, the 1st of June 1593." Will M. Abel Lefranc find new authors for the plays of them all?

Thus the Professor looks upon as a strange episode in Shakespeare's career that which was common to him and to all his friends. His was not a self-conscious advertising age. The poets who wrote and acted when Elizabeth sat upon the throne were not busied in building their own tombstones. They set as little value upon their autographs as did their fellow-citizens. The collection of literary relics had not then been confirmed into a habit. Gossip about Shakespeare and about his "method of work" would have been received with scorn. The single contemporary anecdote which has come down to us from one Manningham, tells us little enough, and does not justify M. Abel Lefranc in picking it up and using it as a stick to beat Shakespeare withal. "There is all that we know of the character of Shakespeare," says he, "of a trick worthy of Falstaff or Panurge, played upon a comrade and old companion! . . . After that, re-read 'Hamlet.'" What a jumble is here! Was Manningham, then, on oath when he told his story? And must we accept as the plain truth the mere froth of anecdotage? Of course an anecdote reflects the narrator rather than the victim. I care as little as I know whether Manningham were accurate or not; and assuredly the story which he has told will not impair or enhance the pleasure which I shall take in re-reading "Hamlet" or "Measure for Measure."

Shakespeare, indeed, was fortunate, like all his contemporaries, in eluding the gossips, and that which M. Abel Lefranc thinks a drawback, Matthew Arnold, himself a true poet, recognises for the happiness it is—

> "And thou, whose head did stars and sunbeams know,
> Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honoured, self-secure,
> Did'st walk on earth unguessed at. Better so."

After all, it is only if you accede to M. Abel Lefranc's method of criticism, and strip Shakespeare of his works, that we can be said to know nothing about him. He has said more things than any other of the sons of men, and he has said them with a finer sense of beauty. For three hundred years he has been a monarch enthroned; he has dispensed with an equal hand his benefits and his decrees; and if he bequeathed us no record of his friendships, no gossip of his tastes, that is not a sound reason for robbing him of his crown of glory.

And is it true to say that we know nothing of Shakespeare? That we should be glad to wrest from time more of the secrets which lie hid is very certain. It is also certain that, scanty as our knowledge of Shakespeare is, it is greater than our knowledge of the most among his

contemporaries. Leaving aside the business transactions which distress M. Abel Lefranc, and looking only to the testimony of his literary colleagues, we shall find that Shakespeare's name was familiar and esteemed. The pretended mystery, pierced at once, is no mystery at all. The writers who were alive in Shakespeare's time knew him and what he did. Francis Meres had no doubts to resolve, nor did he see in the face of Shakespeare the impudent mask of a peer of the realm. "The English nation is mightily enriched and gorgeouslie invested in rare ornaments and resplendent abiliments," he wrote, "by Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Daniel, Drayton, Warner, Shakespeare, Marlow, and Chapman." Thus we are asked to believe that all the others are what they pretend to be, that Shakespeare alone claims a splendour that is not his own. Nor is Francis Meres content to leave Shakespeare in a list. He takes him out of it, and distinguishes him honourably from the rest. "The sweete wittie soule of Ovid," says he, "lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare, witness his 'Venus and Adonis,' his 'Lucrece,' his sugared Sonnets among his private friends." Yet, says M. Abel Lefranc, he was friendless! Even higher soars Meres' praise of Shakespeare's plays. "As Plautus and Seneca," he writes, "are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines, so Shakespeare among the English is most excellent in both kinds for the stage." The poet's supremacy is thus admitted in 1598, without one inapposite hint of the "mean origin, poor relations, strange marriage, and utilitarian tendencies" which perplex his critics.

Even when M. Abel Lefranc admits a passage where Shakespeare's name is cited into his book, he turns it against the miserable "man of Stratford." We all remember what Greene, dying in wretchedness, wrote of his colleague. "Yes, trust them not," said he; "for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hide supposes that he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum* is, in his own conceit the only Shakescene in a countrie." This is nothing but an expression of Greene's ill-temper and jealousy; and see how M. Abel Lefranc interprets it: "To take the evidence," says he, "such as it is offered us, it is averred that one of the good writers of the time, addressing three of his confrères of not the least value, formally accuses Shakespeare of being merely a cynical upstart, an actor with a tiger's heart, a shameless plagiarist, an unscrupulous factotum, in the pay of whoever wishes to employ him, in being a kind of lackey. Has irony ever been carried farther in human affairs?" I cannot read in Greene's outburst one half that M. Abel Lefranc puts there. But even if I could, I should not be per-

suaded to believe, on Greene's unsupported testimony, that Shakespeare was not the author of his own plays. Nor do I see any avowal in the attack that Greene, "a satellite of the Stanley family," had already divined his master's secret. However, that is a specimen of the process which serves M. Abel Lefranc for argument, and it is not strange that, having extracted more from Greene's attack than lurks therein, he makes very light of Chettle's apology. Now Chettle, who printed the 'Groatsworth of Wit,' was as sorry, after Greene's death, "as if the original fault had been his fault." He himself had seen Shakespeare's "demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes." Nor was this all: "besides," he adds, "divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that aprooves his Art." What now becomes of the irony, which cannot be carried further in human affairs?

But it is Ben Jonson who is the fiercest lion in the path of those who would strip Shakespeare of his bays. They can neither evade him nor slay him in his tracks. Jonson wrote of Shakespeare with candour and without equivocation. He saw in the author of "King Lear" no mystery, but a plain honest poet whom he could admire and criticise. "Shakespeare," he told Drummond, "wanted art." That, indeed, was the constant ground of his complaint. A scholar and a university wit himself, he looked askance, now and then, at the rival who had reached a loftier height than he, and by a shorter route. What he said to Drummond he did but amplify in his "Timber." "I remember," says he, "the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penn'd) he never blotted out line. My answer hath beene, would he had blotted a thousand. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted. And to justifiing mine owne candor (for I lov'd the man, and doe honour his memory for this side Idolatry) as much as any." Thereafter follows as fine a piece of criticism as Shakespeare has ever evoked. Is it, then, all sent to the wrong address? Was Ben Jonson, when he wrote that "his wit was in his owne power; would the rule of it had beene so too," thinking of the Earl of Derby, or of the Earl of Rutland, or of Francis Bacon, or of any other candidate whom fanaticism is minded to suggest? It is wholly incredible. Ben Jonson was neither duped nor suborned. He had lived and worked with Shakespeare, and he knew his man, and he described him with what measure of justice was in him. It is characteristic of the critics, who laugh hilariously at the

"Stratfordian doctrine," that, while they involve Ben Jonson in the common charge of Stratfordianism, they do not dare to tackle honestly and straightforwardly the unsolicited testimony which he presents against them.

It was the publication of the First Folio which gave Ben Jonson his happiest chance of eulogy. The verses which he penned "to the memory of my beloved, the Author, Mr William Shakespeare: and what he hath left us," stint nothing in the praise of their subject. In talk across the table, Jonson may have loved his jest better than his friend. When it came to honouring the memory of the dead poet, he gave an easy rein to his eloquence—

> "I therefore will begin. Soule of the Age!
> The applause! delight! the wonder of the Stage!
> My Shakespeare, rise."

And presently, that there may be no doubt as to whom he meant, he openly declares himself what the new critics would call a Stratfordian—

> "Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
> To see thee in our waters yet appeare,
> And make those flights upon the bankes of Thames,
> That did so take Eliza, and our James!"

Truly it would be a mystification if Shakespeare, being nothing better than a poor illiterate barnstormer, should have completely deceived so astute a critic and so good a friend as Ben Jonson.

M. Abel Lefranc, finding it incredible, in accordance with a heresy picked up in America, to believe the simple truth that the greatest poet of our land was born of humble parentage at Stratford-on-Avon, hands over all the poet's works to William, sixth Earl of Derby. For this lavish transference of another man's goods and another man's glory there is, of course, no warrant. M. Abel Lefranc tenders us no evidence. He does not attempt to confute the unimpeachable testimony of many title-pages, vouched for by tradition, and supported by the unanimous authority of contemporaries. How, indeed, should he? He is content to tell us, on Gabriel Fenner's authority, that in 1599 the Earl of Derby was "busyed in penning comedies for the common players." So were a hundred others at that busy moment, who were not the authors of "Hamlet" and "Othello." It is idle to argue about a mere phantasy, and I do not propose to say another word in opposition to M. Abel Lefranc's candidate. But I should like to inquire, in what the French professor calls "the search for truth and the knowledge of human psychology," what motive there could have been for this vast imposture, and how it could possibly have been carried out. It is not every man of genius who would be content to forgo the honour and glory of his art. Peers are more common than poets, and there seems no reason why the Earl of Derby should have refused a crown far greater than that which had been worn by the

Earl of Surrey or Sir Philip Sidney. M. Abel Lefranc's simplicity, always "a wonder for wise men," makes no difficulty. "When William Stanley," he writes, "published the 'first born of his invention,' 'Venus and Adonis,' his father was still alive. It is clear that such a publication would have displeased the Earl of Derby." Why should it have displeased him? And if it had, why should William Stanley, a grown man, have acquiesced in his father's lack of reason? M. Abel Lefranc piles assumption upon assumption. Having assumed that the publication of "Venus and Adonis" was displeasing to the Earl of Derby, he continues bravely: "That is why, not having put his name on the title-page, he signed his dedication to the Earl of Southampton with a pseudonym; he took the name of one of the actors in his brother's company." To be sure, nothing could be easier. We know now what William Stanley's father thought of "Venus and Adonis." Why did his displeasure extend, I wonder, to "Romeo and Juliet" or "Love's Labour's Lost"?

Again, I should like to know in the interest of "human psychology," how the vast conspiracy was kept up, how the self-denying gentleman, whoever he was, that composed the plays of Shakespeare, and blushed at his own fame, managed to guard his secret. What two or three know is known to the world, and it is plain that half a dozen must have pierced the mystery of William Stanley. Greene had already divined it, we are told, as early as 1592, and Edmund Spenser must even then have been admitted into the innermost shrine, since, in "Colin Clout's Come Home Again," he makes a clear reference to the great and hidden poet—

> "And there, though last not least, Aetion,
> A gentler shepherd may no where be found."

Thus he writes of one who is of course the Earl of Derby! Who so churlish as to doubt the obvious truth that "Aetion" refers to the familiar crest of the Stanleys—an eagle preying upon a child in its cradle? Spenser, then, knew who his great contemporary was, but he did not reveal the truth to his nearest friend, Gabriel Harvey. For that benighted man remained a "Stratfordian" to the end of his days. "The younger sort," he wrote, "take much delight in Shakespeare's 'Venus and Adonis'; but his 'Lucrece' and his tragedy of 'Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke,' have it in them to please the wiser sort." This was surely an unfriendly act on Spenser's part — to leave his dear companion immersed in that heavy bog of the Stratfordian heresy, from which Ben Jonson could never extricate himself. And by what ingenious means was Ben Jonson kept in the dark, when Greene and Spenser and Fletcher were all walking about in broad daylight? He was a man who lived in the world, who haunted great houses as well as taverns, who loved talk and his fellows as

much as he loved books. He also loved Shakespeare, and had every chance of discovering the fraud, if fraud it were, in which his friend is now said to be implicated. But from him too the secret was hidden, as it seems to have been hidden from all the sons of men, until it was revealed in a flash to M. Abel Lefranc. Here, then, is a skein too closely confused for me to disentangle, which the new criticism runs through its supple fingers without let or hindrance.

To put new names upon old titles seems to be a pleasant parlour game, if we may judge by the number and the energy of the players. And truly its scope is infinite. By the method of M. Abel Lefranc we can solve all the literary problems which perplex us. For instance, there are certain difficulties in the life and work of Lord Tennyson which have always seemed to me insuperable. How was it that he, the son of a country clergyman in Lincolnshire, should have been familiar with Courts, and basked in the sun of royal smiles? Is not the dedication of the "Idylls of the King" an unpierced mystery? "These to His Memory—since he held them dear." That surely is not a becoming address from one who was, when he is said to have penned it, a mere commoner.

Nor is this all. The works of Tennyson have from the very first been suspected of femininity. Their supposed author, after the publication of the first book, was known as "Miss Alfred." An acute critic of "In Memoriam" divined the sex of the writer when he surmised, with an ingenuity equal to the stoutest anti-Stratfordian's, that the poem was composed by "the widow of a military man." Again, does not "The Princess" wholly baffle our judgment until we acknowledge that it is the work not of a man but of a woman? Who, then, is the real author of the works now foolishly ascribed by Aldworthians to Alfred Tennyson? It is plainly none other than the Duchess of Sutherland, who, being Mistress of the Robes to Queen Victoria, was intimately acquainted with the customs and manners of the Court, and who naturally preferred to hide her great gifts of poetry under another's name. The importance of this discovery, which, by the way, did not come from America, cannot be overrated. It gives a new meaning and a new purpose to the poems, hitherto unworthily claimed by a mere amanuensis. Moreover, it points out to us the true path which literary criticism ought to follow. There are too many upstart crows about us, beautified with the feathers of others, and it is the duty of the critic to pluck them bare. Here, then, is a work, or a sport, in which all may engage; and the work will not be done, the sport will not be finished, while a single name now inscribed upon a title-page holds its place unquestioned.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

THE STORY OF OUR SUBMARINES.—V.

BY KLAXON.

I.

In 1916 we began to look to Germany to produce something very unpleasant in the way of submarines. We were certain she would follow the obvious course indicated by the lessons all belligerents were learning, and produce the big U-cruiser. Very fortunately for us, she produced nothing of the sort until well into 1918, when one small U-cruiser did us a great deal of damage. The point was this—We were worrying and chasing U-boats with trawlers, motor-boats, destroyers, and numbers of other comparatively small and weakly-armed craft. If a U-cruiser, armed with, say, four 6-inch guns, and armoured along her top-strakes, had risen to fight her tormentors—well, it is clear that our small patrol-vessel service would have become suddenly very expensive. Each convoy would have required cruiser protection, and we had not enough cruisers to provide this. In 1917, by our constructor's reckonings, there was no reason why a German submarine could not have been produced which could proceed safely to the East Indies (round the Cape), and repeat (on a bigger scale) the exploits of the *Emden*. Well, the Germans didn't do it; they produced U-cruisers with two 5·9 guns apiece in 1918, but the type was unsatisfactory and unstable. It is still a puzzle to us that the idea came to them so slowly. We had K-class boats with the fleet in 1916 of 2600 tons, and had shown that a big submarine was a working proposition. (The K-boat, of course, is not a cruiser-submarine; she is a fast and lightly-gunned type for use in battle only, and she does not leave the fleet except when detached for watching patrols.) We produced the M-class in 1917, and—for obvious reasons—we kept the type as secret as possible until the Armistice. The M-boat is rather smaller than the K, and is of only seventeen knots speed, but she has far better under-water capabilities than her big companion. She carries, besides her torpedo armament, a 12-inch gun of the normal battleship type. This gun can be carried loaded submerged by the use of a watertight tampion and breech. The boat can rise in the wake of an enemy, fire as she "breaks surface," and submerge again—all in a matter of seconds.

The type was extremely successful, and one can only be thankful that such boats were not on the enemy's side. They would have been the very devil

to deal with on the trade routes, and would have caused us to reconsider very hurriedly our whole system of anti-submarine defence. Of course, four 6-inch would be better than one 12-inch from a German point of view, especially as a destroyer would be likely to attack unscathed under the fire of one big gun, but our type was intended for use against such things as enemy cruisers, and not for sinking merchant ships. By the end of the war the enemy had arrived at the stage of submarine design where one says, "We've got a type that works—let us stick to it, and just add improvements." We passed that stage before the war and are now in the confident (with reservations!) state of feeling that we can turn out anything required to combine the properties of under-water and surface craft. If submarines continue as weapons of war, they will improve very considerably, and the range of possibility of future types is so great that any prophecy now would be rash. It must be remembered, however, that the depth of water in which a boat is intended to operate limits her size. It is not only that the distance from her keel to periscope is (in the case of a big boat) some 50 feet, but also that the great length of a big boat's hull means that even a slight fore-and-aft inclination as she dives will add enormously to her draught; a very long boat in twenty fathoms of water (the North Sea average) would have to be careful not to get off an even keel, as it might happen that in the presence of the enemy her bow or stern would touch bottom, with the result of causing the whole boat to bounce up to the surface. A submarine submerged is in a state of equilibrium, in that she has little or no tendency to rise or sink if her motors are stopped and the boat left to herself. I am afraid in this history that I continue to speak of submarines as if everybody knew a good deal about them. I use technical expressions and words as if I was dealing with things like motor-cars. I will try and explain more clearly what I mean by "bouncing to the surface," and will do so in the idea that there are probably readers who know as much about diving boats as I do of bimetallism.

A submarine is a surface ship which can be submerged and driven ahead at a steady depth-line. She is built strongly in order to resist the water-pressure when she is deep down. She is propelled on the surface by (usually) heavy-oil Diesel engines. When submerged she cannot use these, as they consume air, so she has an electric battery and motors for use under water. The battery is charged when on the surface at her convenience or by favour of the enemy. The Diesel engines are used for this purpose, and they recharge the batteries through the motors, using the latter as dynamos.

In old pictures of projected submarines of the seventeenth

century one sees that the principle of "trimming down" for submersion was known, and that our present-day system of tanks was intended to be substituted by pig-skins which fitted into cylindrical hollows in the hull. These skins were emptied by screwing out a ram from inside (on the idea of old-fashioned printing presses) which squashed the skins. Nowadays a boat is all tanks along her lower half, the upper half being living space and battery room, &c. These tanks are flooded through valves in order to destroy the boat's buoyancy. The water is ejected from them either by pumps or by the use of compressed air, the latter taking the place of the old seventeenth-century screw-press idea. When the tanks have flooded until the boat's buoyancy is all gone—*i.e.*, until you could press her down or lift her up with one hand—she is "trimmed," and by going ahead and working the bow and stern hydroplanes you can keep whatever depth-line is required. When submerged, a look-out is kept through a periscope—a tube about thirty feet long which has lenses all the way up, is water-tight, and has an eye-piece like an ordinary telescope at its lower end.

To dive, a boat opens her vents, puts "dive" helm on, and goes under with her motors running. The flooding valves are kept open to save time; in surface trim a boat is "hanging on the vents"—*i.e.*, if you open the vents (upper valves of the tanks) the water enters and she goes down; until the vents are open the water cannot enter beyond a certain point; when they do open the air in the tanks can get away and the tanks fill up with a rush.

During a trip the "trim" of the boat alters continually. She is using fuel, ammunition, food, and water, and calculation is necessary to allow for this. Certain tanks are used for this compensating, so that on all occasions when a rapid dive is necessary, there is nothing to do but flood the big external tanks, and yet know that the boat will be in hand when under. If mistakes are made, they will show at once. If too much has been put into the "internals" to compensate, the boat will run on down to the bottom in spite of "up helm" and full speed. If too little, you have to flood internals according to an estimate of what is needed as she ploughs along half-submerged; the latter case is one to be avoided, as you may be killed by the enemy while flooding. The usual war practice is to compensate on the "heavy" side—*i.e.*, let her go with a rush and blow tanks so as to catch her and hold her at sixty feet; then you can bring her up to patrol depth at your leisure.

It can be seen, then, that the description of a boat as "bouncing" is not incorrect. When going to the bottom for the night it is a common occurrence, if too rough a "landing" is made, to proceed like a tennis-ball along the

sand for a couple of hundred yards. It is a curious thing that both in the Cattegat and the Sea of Marmora, boats have been able to lie for the night with motors stopped at depths of from thirty to seventy feet. In the Marmora the junction depth of the salt and fresh water is about seventy. A boat trimmed with about two hundred pounds of negative buoyancy out there will, if she stops her motors, sink slowly through the upper layer of fresh (or brackish) water, till she meets the denser salt below; on reaching this she will be in a state of "positive" buoyancy, and after a little bouncing up and down to find her "zero" stratum, she will settle at a steady depth. The same sort of thing—a blessing in the Marmora—is a nuisance in the Bight. A boat crossing the mouths of the German rivers may be at one moment diving comfortably with zero helm on the hydroplanes—the next, she meets a layer of fresh water from the Jahde ebb and is bumping on the bottom with "hard-up" helm and the pumps working on the tanks.

II.

The exploits of "E 11" in the Dardanelles have been published during the war; this boat, however, did not begin her war career in the Sea of Marmora—she had already shown her usual attitude of contemptuous familiarity towards the enemy when on patrol in the Heligoland Bight. On one occasion in 1914 she certainly met a "ghost"—*i.e.*, something which never gave any satisfactory explanation of what it was. "E 11" was diving in sight of Heligoland, and having sighted a line of four destroyers coming over her horizon, she turned in to attack them. Suddenly her bow was jerked up to a startling angle, and tanks had to be hastily flooded to prevent a "break surface." The boat then seemed to go crazy—taking angles by the bow or stern apparently in defiance of all laws of hydrostatics. The captain made up her mind for her by running her down to the bottom in 65 feet and holding her there. In a few minutes the sound of screws came from overhead, and the same sound continued for several minutes. "E 11" was then dived up off the bottom, but was found to be still in the same strange condition, taking up this time an angle of 20 degrees up by the bow. She was once more taken down and held to the bottom, while again screws passed by and curious noises came from overhead. The noises went on for an hour, during which time the officers and crew—with the business-like decision of the British nation—had tea. When the noises had stopped "E 11" was again lifted, when she showed a perfect trim and instant obedience to her hydro-

planes, proceeding along at her normal patrol depth as if she had never given any trouble at all. Nothing was in sight through the periscope except Heligoland, and the explanation of "E 11's" hysteria is still her own secret.

The same boat, as was reported at the time, shared a Christmas dinner with some representatives of the R.N.A.S. on the day of the 1914 Cuxhaven air raid. The Germans have not given us their version of what happened, but from the following it will be seen that it is a pity that they did not publish an uncensored story.

At 11 A.M. "E 11" was diving on her billet to the westward of Norderney, when she saw through the periscope a seaplane coming out to seaward and flying low. She came to the surface, and, having been placed on that billet "according to plan," was not surprised to find that the machine was British. The seaplane took the water safely, and "E 11" took her in tow with the idea of saving the machine. The pilot (carrying his confidential bomb-sight with him) was taken on board first. Hardly had the tow started when two more seaplanes were seen approaching from the direction of the shore, one of them flying very groggily and looking like an imitation of a tumbler pigeon. "E 11" stopped and the machines closed her; so did a large Schutte-Lanz type airship, which was presumably in pursuit of them. Of the two seaplanes the undamaged one came down comfortably close to the submarine, and then all spectators stood up to watch the alighting of the other, which was seen to have had its tail shot off and to be under the nominal control of its ailerons only. Everybody held their breath as the pilot brought the machine down, and there was a general groan of sympathy as the crash came. She pitched nose first into the sea, and it looked as though the pilot could hardly have survived; then a wet figure was seen to climb slowly out of the wreck and perch cross-legged on the tip of the broken tail. By this time the enemy airship had arrived, and "E 11" realised that speed in picking up the seaplane pilots was becoming more advisable every minute. An additional complication chose this moment to turn up in the shape of a U-boat, which appeared on the surface about two miles away and then dived—presumably to attack with torpedoes. "E 11" at this stage of the war was unfortunately not fitted with a gun. She slipped tow from Number One seaplane and fired several revolver bullets through the floats to ensure its sinking. She then closed Number Two and took the pilot and observer off her just as the airship arrived overhead at a height of two hundred feet. The faces of the Germans in the gondolas could be clearly seen, and the men in the middle car were displaying considerable activity—probably wrestling with a faulty bomb-dropping gear.

Before the bombing business was in working order, however, the light breeze had carried the airship down to leeward—much to the relief of "E 11," who saw the enemy restart her engines in order to make a sweep round and get into position again. "E 11," having punctured the floats of Number Two seaplane with bullets, manœuvred alongside Number Three, and picked up a very wet pilot and mechanic. By this time there was every probability of the U-boat having approached inside easy torpedo range—in fact "E 11" was wondering why the expected torpedoes were so slow in arriving. For this reason, and also because the airship was now nearly back overhead again, any further delay was rash, and so the pilot and mechanic were unceremoniously hustled below, and "E 11" demonstrated to them what a "crash-dive" was like from inside. The depth gauges had just reached nineteen feet when two heavy explosions occurred on the surface, —the enemy's bomb-dropping gear was working nicely again, but too late. "E 11" went under feeling a little hurt at having had to leave a job unfinished; she had meant to sink Number Three seaplane before leaving, and was unhappy at the idea of it being still of use to the enemy. On rising sufficiently to use her periscope, however, she was delighted to observe the Schutte-Lanz venting its hate in machine-gun fire on the abandoned machine—an expenditure of ammunition which continued until the sorely-tried raider sank. "E 11" was for a moment inclined to come up to pass a polite signal of thanks to the enemy, but, after consultation, it was decided that humour was wasted on Germans, and so the boat was taken on to the bottom for a rest while the Xmas dinner was disposed of. The five passengers shared the dinner, and presumably enjoyed the day, but it blew half a gale and more all the way home to Harwich, and the motion of an "E" boat takes a lot of getting used to.

Everybody has read of the doings of this submarine in the Sea of Marmora, and I will try to avoid writing about despatches already published; but I think the actions between submarines and soldiers have been perhaps only lightly touched on, in view of the fact that such actions are so unique in their nature and circumstances.

In August 1915 "E 14" and "E 11" met at a rendezvous in the Marmora with the intention of acting on "information received." "E 11" says:—

"August 7th, 5 A.M.: Dived by Dohan Aslan Buoy, keeping watch on road.

"11.30 A.M.: Observed troops on road leading towards Gallipoli. Rose to surface and opened fire, several shots dropping well amongst them, causing them to scatter. Observed column approaching along same road. Range of the road now being known from our position, dropped several shells among them. Column took cover in open order.

"1.10 P.M.: Large column observed

on road nearer Gallipoli, marching at high speed. Opened fire, but failed to stop progress of column, although a large number of dead and wounded appeared to be left alongside the road. This column was under fire for about half an hour, when we were forced to dive by shore guns.

"3.20 P.M: Rose to surface and opened fire at a considerable body of troops, apparently resting. They immediately dispersed, and subsequently opened a well-directed fire with a field-gun. Dived."

"E 14" (her captain, Commander Boyle, was senior to Commander Nasmith of "E 11") says:—

"August 7th . . . at 1.30 P.M.: I saw more dust coming down the road. Rose to the surface, and opened fire on troops marching towards Gallipoli. "E 11" was firing at the time I came up. I had stationed her to the north-east of Dohan Aslan Bank, and she first shelled the troops on a part of the road showing there, and then came down to my billet, where we both shelled them for the best part of an hour. I got off forty rounds, and about six of them burst in the middle of the troops. I had to put full range on the sights and aim at the top of the hill, so my shooting was not very accurate. "E 11" having a 12-pdr., did much more damage, and scattered the troops several times. Soon after 2 P.M. they started firing on us from the shore and out-ranging us."

"E. 11" on August 18th:—

"7 A.M.: Rose to surface near Dohan Aslan Buoy to bombard troops, but they scattered before fire was opened.

"8.30 A.M.: Rose to surface and opened fire on large convoy on road, several shells falling among them before they managed to scatter.

"9 A.M.: Observed fire springing up where our shots had fallen. This rapidly increased in size, until in the afternoon and evening it had assumed very large proportions."

A U-boat was captured by cavalry in 1918, but that case was perhaps exceptional. In the Napoleonic wars it was customary for English frigates to fire at French troops marching along the coast-roads of Spain, so that the E-boats in the Marmora were only repeating history, but they certainly showed that the new weapon was a most disconcerting one for troops to have to reply to.

I do not intend to fill pages with unexplained despatches but the following extracts explain themselves, and, in any case, are too good to be omitted from any Submarine history.

"E 11" (Commander Nasmith):—

"May 23rd, 5.50 A.M.: Observed Turkish torpedo-gunboat at anchor off Constantinople. Attacked and sank her with port-bow torpedo, striking her amidships on the starboard side. While sinking she opened fire with a 6-pdr. gun, the first round hitting the foremost periscope. Proceeded to position north of Kalolimno Island. Rose to surface, and prepared damaged periscope for new top.

"10.30 A.M.: Hands to bathe.

"May 24th, 10.30 A.M.: Observed small steamer proceeding to the westward. Examined vessel through periscope, and rose to surface on her port quarter. Signalled her to stop. No notice was taken. Brought her to a standstill by several rounds from a rifle directed at her bridge. Ordered crew to abandon the ship. This they carried out with reckless haste, capsizing all but one boat. Fortunately with this boat they were able to right the other two and pick up those swimming in the water. An American gentleman then appeared on the upper deck, who informed us that his name was Silas Q. Swing, of the 'Chicago Sun,' and that he was

pleased to make our acquaintance. He then informed us that the steamer was proceeding to Chanak with Turkish marines, and that he was not sure if there were any stores on board.

"Ran up alongside and put Lieutenant D'Oyly-Hughes on board with demolition party. He discovered a 6-inch gun lashed across the top of the fore-hatch—the forehold containing one large 6-inch gun mounting and several small 12-pdr. pedestals, the guns for which were probably at the bottom of the hold.

"The after-hold was full of 6-inch projectiles, and on top of this were resting about fifty large white-metal cartridge-cases marked Krupp. The demolition charge was then placed against the ship's side in the after-hold, well tamped with 6-inch shells and cartridges. All hands returned to the boat and the charge was fired. The vessel exploded with a loud report, and a large column of smoke and flame shot up."

At 11.15 A.M. "E 11" dived into Rodosto harbour after a heavily-laden store-ship. At 12.35 she torpedoed her as she lay alongside the pier. In the afternoon she missed a paddle-steamer which managed to save herself by beaching.

On the 25th "E 11" dived into Constantinople and torpedoed a steamer alongside the Arsenal. On the 28th she sank a large supply ship. On the 31st she torpedoed a large vessel lying in Panderma Roads. On June 2nd she got another, which was probably —from the violence of the explosion—laden with ammunition. On June 7th, on her way out of the Sea of Marmora, "E 11" sank a large troopship and so finished her cruise. I am quoting these statistics to point out what damage may be done by a single submarine on an army's line of communication.

The moral effect (in such ways as delaying and scaring traffic) is, of course, as great as the material, and probably far greater.

The Marmora submarines hardly deign to mention such small fry as dhows and other sailing ships, but the list runs to a great length when put together. Here are a few days' sinkings by "E 14" (Commander Boyle). On June 20th she sank three dhows, on the 22nd one, on the 23rd a two-masted sailing ship, on the 24th two dhows, and on the 27th a brigantine.

Nowadays a submarine on that sort of duty would have to expect all kinds of retaliation and unpleasantness, but at that stage of the war the anti-submarine work was feeble, and the enemy must have cursed at his own impotence to defend his sea routes.

"E 12" (Commander Bruce) was the boat that had the battle at ten yards' range with an armed tug in the Sea of Marmora. She came victorious out of the action, having sunk her opponent. She had a habit of using her one gun in a violent manner which caused much distress to the enemy. On the 16th September 1916, on a trip up the Dardanelles, she torpedoed a munition steamer in Burgas Bay. On the 18th, being then inside the Marmora, she

"Dived into Rodosto, but found nothing. Chased torpedo-boat of the 'Antalia' class off Kalolimno

Island. We both opened fire at about 8000 yards, the torpedo-boat turning towards us. The fourth shot hit her aft, and she then turned and proceeded at high speed towards Constantinople, seeming to be on fire aft."

The Turkish anti-submarine craft must have been in the position of the darkey who hooked the alligator—"Is dis nigger fishing, or is dis fish a-niggerin'?"

"E 12" continues unmoved—

"Proceeded into Mudania, bombarded Magazine outside town, hit it eight times, silenced the batteries which opened fire on us and damaged the railway. Sank two sail and proceeded towards Gulf of Ismid."

Nothing was seen in Ismid owing to fog, and so she tried the vicinity of Marmora Island, where on the 21st she sank a steamer of 3000 tons and six dhows. Things were dull till the 28th, when she sank three sail off Ismid. On the 29th she met with anti-submarine work again.

"Sank one sail off Rodosto. Destroyer came out, but returned again on sighting us, . . . we were opened fire on from Sar Kioi. Opened fire on them and silenced their guns. Sank four sail three miles farther to the westward. Aeroplane dropped two bombs, the nearest falling 30 yards from our stern."

On the 5th October she sank a small steamer and seventeen sail in Rodosto Bay. An aeroplane dropped a bomb at her with no success. On the 9th she chased a torpedo-boat on the surface, but was unable to get within range. On the 12th she sank another steamer, and on the 17th submarine "H 1" having come up the Dardanelles also, the two boats chased a gunboat and, getting each side of her, gave her an unhappy time. They hit her several times and she appeared to have lost control, as she nearly went ashore on Kalolimno Point. Eventually she found shelter in Panderma. "E 12" dived in after her, but owing to fog could not see her. Both boats waited patiently all night in hopes of her coming out, but were disappointed. On the 19th "E 12" fired on Constantinople powder factory and had hit it three times before 5·9-in. guns opened fire on her from the shore and made her dive.

On the 25th "E 12" returned down the Narrows. Her experience with the net should be read, remembering that she was an old boat and not meant to stand deep-water pressures.

She passed through the net at 80 feet depth and carried a portion of it with her. This portion must have had some of the heavy weights attached that had been holding the net down, for as the boat came through she took a big angle down by the bow and sank.

The forward hydroplanes caught in the net jammed at "10° of dive." "E 12's" external tanks were blown out and full speed put on the motors. The boat continued down, however, and as the pressure increased, the conning-tower glass scuttles burst in and the conning-tower filled up, the hull leaked forward, and the fore compartment had

to be closed off. By putting three men on the wheel the bow hydroplanes were moved a little, and after ten minutes at 245 feet the boat started to rise. They managed to check her at 12 feet, but found her almost uncontrollable. Six patrol boats opened fire as the conning-tower showed above water, and then the panting hydroplane men forced her down again. The boat continued to dive badly (she was still towing the net and sinkers), and twice she ran down to 120 feet. Both diving gauges had failed and the gyroscopic compass had followed suit. The conning-tower (magnetic) compass was flooded out and useless. Then at 80 feet she struck chain moorings off Kelid Bahr and scraped past. This broke away the length of net she had been towing, and released of the weight she rose at once, and before the tanks could be filled again broke surface. The shore batteries and patrol vessels opened fire at once, hitting the conning-tower full with a small shell and sending small shells and splinters through the bridge. As the boat went down (the conning-tower being flooded already the shell hole was nothing to worry about) a torpedo fired from Kelid Bahr passed over her, and another 50 yards astern of her. "E 12" continued her dive towards home, her trim and control being then normal. She observed two large explosions a couple of miles astern of her and saw the track of another torpedo, but was not further molested, and joined the Dardanelles Fleet a few hours later.

Submarine "H 1" (Lieutenant Pirie) has been mentioned as having worked in company with "E 12." An "H" boat is, of course, much smaller and less seaworthy than an "E," being of 400 tons and 150 feet length. Before meeting "E 12" at the rendezvous, this boat had sunk a steamer. Later she sank three more steamers and a dhow. As "E 12" was leaving the Marmora first, she politely took "H 1's" mails out with her.

"E 7" (Commander Cochrane) made herself unpopular with the enemy in July of 1915. She passed up the Dardanelles (being missed "overhead" by a torpedo fired from Kelid Bahr) on the 30th June, and on 2nd July sank a steamer and two dhows in Rodosto Bay. On the 3rd she sank a brigantine, and on the 6th a 200-ton Zebec and another brigantine. On the 7th she got a tug and a ferry-steamer and had an action on the surface with a two- or three-gun gunboat which retired, leaving a dhow to its fate. In the evening she chased a ferry-steamer ashore. In the morning she sighted the same ferry-steamer under way and sank her. On the 9th she got a Zebec, and on the 10th she dived into Mudania and torpedoed a steamer alongside the pier. On the 11th she sank two dhows, and on the 15th she dived into Constantinople and fired a torpedo at the Arsenal (which is close to the water) in the hope of

detonating something. The explosion was very heavy when the torpedo hit. She then dived out and came to the surface off Zeitunlik Powder Mills, into which she fired twelve rounds. On the 16th she sank a dhow, and at 9.30 A.M. on the 17th she opened fire on a railway cutting a mile west of Kaya Burnu and blocked the line. She then waited till she saw a heavy troop train going west, and chased at full speed to pick up the fruits of her labours. The train entered the cutting, and, as was expected, backed out again into Yarandje Station. "E 7" settled down to work, and after twenty rounds had been fired, three ammunition cars blew up. Later in the day she shelled another train and hit several cars, without, however, doing so much damage. She concluded an interesting day by sinking another dhow. On the 18th she sank a brigantine, and was fired at by rifles from Mudania. She replied by hitting a steamer with one shell, and the buildings from which rifles were being fired with ten. Three shells fired into a small shed on the beach produced heavy and satisfactory explosions. On the 19th she sank four sail, and on the 21st one; on the 22nd she fired again on a train rounding Kaya Burnu and on a stone railway bridge. On the 24th she came back through the Narrows, presumably to the immense relief of the Turks. On her next trip, as has already been related, "E 7" was sunk and the crew captured. The coxswain was imprisoned some 60 miles from the coast of Asia Minor. He made a small canvas boat, *carried it with him* to the beach across that 60 miles of hills and put to sea. He was blown back by a gale, however, and recaptured on the day that his captain escaped from a camp 300 miles inland.

In these interminable lists of sinkings of unarmed vessels it may appear to the reader as if the work had been done roughly and without consideration for the lives of non-combatants. The following report from the commanding officer of the flotilla should be noted:—

> "The destruction of the enemy's means of transport in the Sea of Marmora has been pursued throughout with the utmost regard for humanity. Ships carrying refugees have invariably been spared, and the crews of sailing vessels either given time to escape or rescued at considerable inconvenience to the submarine. On many occasions the crews of vessels destroyed have shown their surprise and gratitude at the consideration shown to them."

The first boat to enter the Narrows was "B 11" (Lieutenant Holbrook). She successfully torpedoed and sank the Turkish battleship *Messudiyeh*. The outstanding fact of this feat was that the boat was built in the summer of 1906, making her well over eight years old when she went into the Dardanelles. Eight years is a great age for a submarine in a Service which advances every month in its knowledge of construction, and "B 11" was in 1914 almost ready for a final paying off. She showed, however, that the

old boats were by no means useless if handled as they should be.

The first trip right into the Marmora was by "A-E 2" (Lieut.-Commander Stoker). She was an Australian boat of the same type as the other E's. She was unfortunately sunk by a destroyer in the Marmora after getting in.[1]

In the Baltic also, at the beginning of the War, targets were far more plentiful than in the North Sea. Commander Horton in "E 9" sank a destroyer on January 29, 1915. On June 4 he sank a transport which was protected by a destroyer screen. On July 2 he torpedoed and badly damaged the *Prinz Adalbert*. On July 29 "E 1" (Commander Laurence) sank a transport. On August 19 he torpedoed and damaged the *Moltke*, incidentally causing the enemy to withdraw from the attack on the Gulf of Riga—an attack which at the moment showed every probability of succeeding. Later in the war the Germans renewed their attack successfully—secure in the knowledge that the internal conditions caused by the Revolution had prevented the British submarines from operating. At that time we had in the Baltic four "E" Class ("E 18," Lieut.-Commander Halahan, having been lost at sea in May 1916 with all hands, from a cause unknown) and four "C" Class. The latter boats had, instead of entering the Baltic by the Sound, come in August 1916 *viâ* the White Sea and up the Dvina river in wooden barges towed by tugs; they came practically empty, and their batteries, &c., were replaced in them on arrival at Petrograd. The Revolution caused such chaos that the flotilla was practically tied to harbour after the Soviet Government's installation. "C 27" (Lieutenant Sealy), however, was able to torpedo a transport during the attack on Oesel, and was also reported to have damaged one of the screening vessels. There is no doubt that the knowledge that these submarines had been rendered powerless enormously helped the Germans in the Baltic. Perhaps the best tribute to their efficiency is the insertion by the enemy in the Peace Treaty with Russia of a clause insisting on the British boats' destruction. On April 5, 1918, the boats were blown up and the crews came home overland.

Curious stories were brought back by the returning officers and men of Revolutionary conditions. The English were not molested, but were still apparently respected by the Russian sailors. One unfortunate seaman of the Revolutionary Navy had insulted one of our officers, who complained to the Council about it. The wretched man was arrested, and would have been executed if the officer had not personally begged for his life. This being granted, the man was brought

[1] As I have not the despatch by me, I am postponing the account of her passage till later.

across to the E boat to apologise. His mates assisted him to do this by rubbing his face on the iron deck before the Lieutenant-Commander's feet. He was then sent indefinitely to Siberia. The same men who took such steps to uphold politeness to England and her officers at that date, had already brutally hacked numbers of their own officers to pieces, and had drenched their Admiral in paraffin and set a light to him.

When the debacle came, and the German transports were approaching, an effort was made to get both British and Russian submarines to sea. The following incident is hardly credible, but I believe it is true: one Russian boat on leaving harbour did a dive for practice—a very wise thing to do. Her after-hatch was open, and should have been closed on the order to dive. It was not closed, for the simple reason that the man whose duty it was to close it was having his "Stand easy" at the time, and therefore considered the order to shut down to be unconstitutional. He was near the hatch himself, and he sat there and watched the Baltic come in as the boat went under; if ever anybody died for his principles that man did. However, the captain and first lieutenant of the boat escaped as she sank, and were court-martialled for losing their ship. By a nightmare of Revolutionary logic they were sent to Siberia, the court finding that the order to shut down was illegal and harsh, in that certain of the crew were taking their rest, and could not be expected to obey any order.

The E boats at that time had a number of Russian officers on board who had come to them for protection. It was customary for the Russian crews to vote for their captains, and as the life of a captain (controlled by a Council of the crew) was a short and precarious one, it was not uncommon for a new leader of a poll to desert by swimming to the British flotilla. When the flotilla was eventually destroyed by its own officers, Captain Cromie remained to make a last effort to bring the fighting forces back to the Allies' side. As is known to all the world, he closed with his death on the Embassy stairs a chapter of history that our Navy will never have cause to be ashamed of.

Revolutionary crews in Russian submarines gave illustrations of what happens if democracy is carried to its limits. An English submarine officer did a short trip in a boat belonging to the Russian Navy, and his comment about it was that "if it had not been so serious it would have been comic." The crew's committee had dismissed the engineer and mechanicians for reasons of their own, with the result that furious altercations used to go on as to the best way to start up the engines. The results were not always successful; but the cook, who seemed to be the only man aboard who knew how it was done, used to eventually inter-

vene and make the much-enduring metal get to work again. This, of course, was at sea and near to the enemy.

Some difficulties were experienced in keeping the British submarine sailors away from the Russians when the boats were in harbour. Captain Cromie reported on one occasion: "I regret to report that striking cases are becoming more frequent, chiefly due to insolence on the part of the Russians and a growing contempt for them on the part of our men." Our sailors had no objection to anybody's political opinions, but they did object to a spirit of murder in substitution for a fighting spirit. The whole of Russia at that time was in a turmoil. Bolshevism was beginning, and the Germans were sweeping up the Russian ships and defences as if they were empty. The Russian Naval Commander-in-Chief went in person to assist in the defence of the Gulf of Riga. When he and his staff arrived at Hapsal they had to walk seven versts to Rogikoul, as the railway was on strike for vodka!

The Baltic submarine flotilla vanished with the collapse of Russia, but it had made a great name for itself. Even during the nightmare of revolutionary lunacy that preceded the end, it was looked on by all the Russians as the one straightforward and efficient force that remained. The lowest as well as the highest respected it as the symbol of honesty and courage. During its career it had caused the greatest annoyance to the enemy, on occasions holding up and stopping practically all traffic from Germany to Sweden in enemy ships. The following extracts show the way some of the work was done:—

"'E 9' (Commander Horton), October 18th, 1916, 5.50 P.M.: Chased steamer and ordered her to stop by International Code and by firing maxim ahead of her. She proved to be the German ship *Soderham* of Hamburg. Boarding party went aboard and told crew to abandon ship, then opened up sea-cocks and exploded demolition charges.

"At 7.15 P.M. stopped a ship with flashing lamp and maxim. She was the *Pernambuco* of the Hamburg South American Line—from Lulea to Stettin with iron ore (3500 tons). Sent crew off in boats and sank her. Her chief officer stated her to be of 7000 tons. 6.55 A.M.: Chased, boarded, and sank the *Johannes Russ* of Hamburg—same routine as previously. 10.47 A.M.: Hove to the German ship *Dal Alfven*, and ordered her to abandon ship. A destroyer was with her, and approached me at speed. It was impossible to discover her nationality end-on, so dived and watched her. She proved to be the Swedish destroyer *Wale*. She took *Dal Alfven's* crew on board from their boats. Rose and closed *Wale*. Following conversation ensued:—

"*Wale*. 'You are in Swedish neutral waters.'

"'E 9.' 'I make myself six miles from land.'

"*Wale*. 'I make you five.'

"'E 9.' 'Neutral limit is three miles—please stand clear while I sink this ship.'

"11.24 A.M.: Fired stern tube at *Dal Alfven*. *Wale* was 100 yards on our beam. Torpedo ran well and vessel sank in two minutes."

"E 19" (Commander Cromie) was at sea also at this time:—

"October 3rd, 5.30 P.M.: Stopped

German merchantman. She would not obey the signal until I hit her with a shell amidships—then she abandoned ship. Put five shot-holes in her water-line and left her on a lee shore. Weather getting worse.

"October 10th: Sea rough with rain squalls. Stopped German ship *Lulea*. Made crew abandon ship and then sank her.

"October 11th: Sank *Walter Leonhardt* of Hamburg. Crew taken aboard Swedish steamer. Then sank *Gutrune*, carrying iron ore to Hamburg. At 4.55 P.M., stopped and sank *Director Rippenhagen*, carrying magnetic ore to Nordenhem. Put the crew aboard Swedish steamer *Martha*. 6.30 P.M.: Sank the *Nicomedia*, carrying iron ore to Hamburg. Crew pulled ashore.

"Stopped the *Nike*. This ship requiring further investigation, I put a prize crew on board and sent her to Revel. Her captain informed me that twenty German ships laden with iron ore are stopped at Lulea, waiting for escort."

On November 2nd "E 19" was on the traffic route again and sank the *Ruomi* of Hamburg. (The work being done by these boats was the same as the Germans were doing to us, but if the Germans had carried out their work with the same decency and care for the lives of the non-combatants they would be receiving far more consideration and respect from us now.) The enemy had now started to protect their traffic lane, and they sent out a cruiser to drive the E boats away.

"E 19" continues (November 7th, 1.45 P.M.):—

"Fired starboard beam tube 1100 yards' range, hitting her forward on starboard side. The cruiser (*Ancona* class) swung round and stopped. At 1.55 P.M. fired stern tube at 1200 yards. Torpedo hit just abaft mainmast, and after-magazine blew up. Three minutes later there was no sign of her."

The German ships torpedoed in the Baltic seem to have had touchy magazines. Commander Goodhart (E 8) met the *Prinz Adalbert* on October 23rd, 1915. She was zigzagging slightly and going 15 knots, with two destroyers zigzagging ahead as a screen. The torpedo was fired at the fore-bridge as she passed, and—

"Observed very vivid flash of explosion along water-line at point of aim. This was immediately followed by a very heavy concussion, and the entire ship was completely hidden by a huge column of thick grey smoke—fore magazine having evidently been exploded by torpedo. As many portions of the ship were observed to be falling in the water all round, I proceeded to 50 feet depth."

The range of this shot was about 1300 yards. This comparatively long distance was fortunate, as the resultant explosion would have probably caused a terrific shock to E 8 had she happened to fire from closer.

The E boats in the Baltic came from Harwich *vid* the Sound. It sounds simple, but it was a remarkably difficult and dangerous trip. For six miles in the narrow it is too shallow for a submarine to submerge. The boats had to trim down and go along with their conning-towers showing and their keels bumping along the rocky bottom. The traffic—both neutral and enemy—was so thick that it was not so much a question of avoiding being seen, as of actually avoiding collision. A maze of

moving and fixed lights, searchlights, star-shells, and attempts to ram made up a nightmare of navigational difficulties to add to the normal anxiety of passing through thick traffic in a narrow channel. It was really a marvel that any boats got through safely at all.

III.

Throughout this history I am giving selections from despatches of typical "contacts" with the enemy, or of those which describe exciting incidents on patrol; but I don't want to give the idea that submarine patrol work was one whirl of gaiety, and that a boat had only to go to sea in order to find a target. The facts are very different. A boat might do a matter of twenty trips without meeting any kind of chance at an enemy, and I suppose that each boat averaged two to three thousand miles of diving between chances. The following description of routine in a patrol boat must stand for four years of blank days in the North Sea, Atlantic, or Mediterranean:—

The boat dives at dawn, and, the trim correct and the captain satisfied, the order is given to "fall out all but diving-hands." One officer remains at the periscope, while the remainder and the majority of the crew move off to their sleeping billets and lie down. When not on watch it is customary for everybody to sleep, read, and eat all the time; this is to conserve the stock of air in the boat. Oxygen is not carried, but "purifiers" are. The air in the hull of the boat is, however, ample for a long day's dive, and except when kept down by accident or the machinations of the enemy there is no necessity to renew it. It is kept on the move, however, by ordinary circulating fans, which produce a general draught and disturbance of the hales of bad air around each man's head, and this keeping of the air moving makes a great difference—in fact, with no fans running a match fails to burn after nine hours' diving; with all fans circulating a match can be lit after a dive of from fourteen to eighteen hours. Why this is, I don't know. If any work is done while diving (such as reloading of tubes or repairing of damage) the air is used more rapidly—in fact, extraordinarily quickly. When no work is being done, but only the usual day's dive has been carried out, there is a slight increase in rate of respiration among the hands on watch, with a slighter rise in rate of pulse. But as soon as one attempts to do anything, such as lifting weights or making a speech to the crew on the subject of their crimes, one finds it necessary to breathe heavily and quickly; and in fact, in the case of the speech, only a few

minutes' harangue would be possible towards the end of a day. Officers do not keep watch at the periscope for more than a couple of hours at a time—it is bad for the eyes and bad for the temper; the deadly monotony of shuffling slowly round while stooping to stare at a perfectly blank and usually misty horizon is the worst part of a patrol. The periscope work makes one sleepy also. Submarine officers sleep a lot; the work is dull and sleep passes the time. One gets tired of reading, although one certainly reads an extraordinary amount. A succession of blank uneventful trips is good for education, however; somebody once said that the book to be cast away on a desert island with was Gibbons' 'Roman Empire.' I have known heavier books than that to be worked through on patrol—even to weighty tomes on Constitutional History. The sailors also read, sleep, and eat continuously. A few hands keep watch on the hydroplane wheels, the pumps, and the motors; the rest take it easy. They study such periodicals as one finds on the counters of small tobacconists' shops, and in addition they borrow and read intelligently the more abstruse literature from their officers' library.

There is not much cooking done while diving. Cooking is done in electric ovens and boilers, but it is usual to do what work is necessary with these when the boats are charging batteries on the surface. Cooking when submerged uses oxygen, makes smells, and expends battery power, and is discouraged. Cold meals are the rule, and submarine people cannot complain of being underfed, as there is a special supply for them of bottled fruits and other extras to obviate the dangers of illness to men living without exercise or fresh air in such confined quarters. On the whole, the crews keep healthy and fit, but there has been a good deal of illness and also eye-strain among the officers during the war.

I have said that while one officer is on watch at the periscope the others sleep or read. It is remarkable, however, how awake they are to certain sounds or happenings. An officer may take some minutes to rouse when called for his spell on watch, but if instead of the gentle shaking of the messenger he felt a change of inclination of the boat, or a new vibratory note from the motors, or if he felt by the cessation of rolling that the boat was sinking, he would be awake in a flash. The human brain seems to keep one technical department always on watch, and it misses nothing. A boat patrolling in a slight swell keeps up a gentle roll at periscope depth, and all the time one hears the rattle and click of the shafting as the fore and aft hydroplanes are worked to keep her at her depth-line. If, for instance, she meets a stratum of fresh water, she will begin to sink; the hydroplanes will be worked

up to "hard-a-rise" and left there, with the boat inclined up and trying to climb. The officer at the periscope will order a tank to be partially emptied and will increase speed on the motors to help her climb up again. As she goes down the rolling will cease, and the silence of the hydroplane shafts, the hum of the motors, and the angle of the boat will tell every sleeper at once exactly what is happening; some of them could probably tell the actual depth the boat had got down to without looking at the gauge. In the same way when on passage on the surface a change of note in the roar of the Diesel engines will wake all hands—it might mean something important. When on the surface, there is one sound which wakes everybody without any exception—and that is the electric alarm horn. It makes a dry blaring noise which is unmistakable, and in view of the fact that it may be the preliminary to the loss of the boat, it interests all hands very intimately. There is always the feeling, especially if it is dark, that the officer on watch may have rung it too late, and that before the boat can be forced under a destroyer stem may come crashing through the pressure hull. A submarine hates being on the surface—at least, a patrol submarine does. She has to come up to recharge her batteries or to "make a passage." It must be reiterated that a submarine is fairly fast and of long radius on the surface, and of slow speed and low capacity submerged. It will be understood that a boat is in an anxious position if she has been diving long and her battery is low when she is near enemy patrols. She has *got* to come up and charge again, and while charging a low battery she is rather helpless. Every weapon has its weak point, and a knowledge of where the weakness lies means a chance to the opponent.

Neither side had any submarines present at the Battle of Jutland, for the simple reason that neither side had at that time any boats fast enough to cruise with the Fleet and so arrive in time at a tactical rendezvous. One boat did arrive at the scene of battle next day—a homeward-bound U-boat who knew nothing of what had happened; she passed through an area of water which was covered with corpses, wreckage, and debris, and which was occasionally marked by the ends of sunken ships standing up above the surface. She cruised about, wondering, for a time, and then hurried on into harbour.

If, however, there had been another fleet action during the war, the fast submarine would have been represented in it. The Germans never built anything like our K class boats, and so the test of the type would have been carried out by us only. Tests in practice had given such good results that the reluctance of the enemy to repeat the Jutland experiment was very disap-

pointing to the K-boat officers, who had two years of waiting for their one chance—a chance which never arrived. A submarine of 2600 tons cannot throw up her tail and slip under in a few seconds as an E-boat can do—she must be taken under with due respect for her great length and size, and she cannot therefore be used on the usual Bight patrols. She is built and designed for battle only, and the type, apart from a few "incidents" with enemy submarines while employed on scouting patrols, had to share the fate of the Grand Fleet battleships which never got a fair chance at the enemy. The building of these boats, however, showed us that the big submarine was a working possibility. We designed and built them to a certain specification, and they showed they could improve on that specification in practice, and they gave most valuable data for future design.

There is, at any rate, one point on which prophecy as to the future of submarines (if they are allowed by International Law to continue to develop) is safe: at present a boat has to travel submerged by electric power, because that is the only form of propulsion we know which does not consume air. When an engine arrives which can propel a boat under water by abstracting the necessary oxygen from the surrounding sea, we will have made the submersible a commercial proposition. A properly stream-lined body moves faster under than on the surface of water, and with a submersible internal combustion engine there would be in all probability a doubling of the speed of ships. That such a type of engine will come there is little doubt, and when it is remembered that water is a far cheaper protection from shells than is armour-plate, a field for prophecy is opened which is much too big and tempting to venture into here.

Whatever happens, the German policy of torpedoing merchant ships without warning must be made not only illegal, but unsafe for a nation adopting it; the use of this weapon by the enemy has made the word submarine one of reproach; the submarine personnel of every allied navy feels that an honourable weapon has, on its first appearance in a great sea war, had its name degraded by a section of its users. If these notes of mine serve no other purpose, they will at any rate do something towards differentiating between the submarine and the U-boat. If the name of the weapon is to become a term of reproach, it is better to particularise and to spare the honour of the Allied Navies.

I am going to relate an incident which occurred during the war. It was not in the presence of the enemy, and so there is little direct connection between it and a War History. But it is illustrative of the ideas of the Submarine Service in that it evoked little comment among the Flotillas, the

standard shown by the personnel being considered to be normal, and in accordance with accepted practice.

Submarine "C 12" was under way in the Humber; her main driving motors failed, and before the fault could be remedied or anchors let go, she was carried by the strong ebb-tide against the bows of destroyers which were lying at the Eastern Jetty at Immingham, and badly holed. Most of the crew and the first lieutenant (Lieutenant Sullivan) were below at the time, while the captain (Lieutenant Manley) was on deck. Seeing that the boat was sinking fast, Lieutenant Manley ordered all hands on deck. They hurried up, the first lieutenant remaining below. The water was pouring in over the electric batteries, causing heavy chlorine fumes to be given off. The boat was on the verge of sinking when, the last man being up, Lieutenant Manley went below, closing the conning-tower lid after him. The boat then went to the bottom, with both officers inside her. Finding, however, that nothing could be done owing to the extent of the damage, the chlorine gas, and the weight of water entering, these officers entered the conning-tower, closing the lower door after them. They then flooded the conning-tower and, lifting the upper door, swam to the surface, reporting that nothing could now be done without salvage plant to lift the boat.

War produces a lot of incidents of a noteworthy kind, but work in submarines produces similar incidents under peace conditions also, because the Service is always at war with its constant enemy—the sea. The boats have small buoyancy, and a leak is a dangerous thing; they are very vulnerable to the ram, and even in peace manœuvres before the war we lost 6 boats from collisions either on the surface or diving. During the war we lost 61 boats, of which—

7 were blown up without losses in personnel—these being the boats of the Baltic Flotilla.

20 were lost from a cause unknown. In other words, they went on patrol, and nothing more was heard of them. The enemy have no knowledge of their fate, and there were no survivors from them. Their loss was probably due to their striking mines.

5 were sunk by enemy submarines (one of them —"E 20"—in the Sea of Marmora).

3 were sunk while entering the Dardanelles, and 1 by gun-fire in the Marmora.

4 were sunk by mines off our own coasts.

3 were wrecked on neutral coasts, 1 in the Baltic, and 1 on our own coast.

2 were sunk by air bombs.

7 were sunk by collision.

3 were sunk in error by gun or ram by our own side.

1 sank in harbour, 1 sank on trials, 1 was sunk by gun-fire after sinking a German destroyer off the Bight, and "C 3" blew herself up on St George's Day against the Mole at Zeebrugge.

The losses were heavy, but were not incurred uselessly. The boats were the outposts of the Fleet, and, however great the losses, they could never have equalled those the bigger ships would have had to endure had they been given the same patrols to perform.

Looking at the above list, one can see that the majority of the losses were due to mines. Losses by direct contact with the enemy were infrequent. This, of course, is because only a Fleet holding command of the sea can institute regular anti-submarine methods and patrols. Our boats were working in and around the Bight, and were taking the risks of mine-fields all the time. The five wrecks show that navigational difficulties are increased in war-time. This was found also by surface vessels. The Dardanelles took their toll; it was easy to do damage to traffic in the Marmora from a well-trained submarine, but getting in and out of the Narrows was no simple matter. Of the two sunk by air bombs, one was alongside in harbour, and the other was destroyed by an Allied aircraft which mistook her for a U-boat; the submarine could have easily dived and avoided attack, but was under the impression her unfortunate opponent was only closing in order to make signals. The three others sunk in error by our own side show that a submarine's risks are great even on her own coast, and that methods of identification can never be perfected. The enemy suffered more than we did from errors. They had several clashes between their own destroyers: on June 1 (the morning after Jutland) the *Stettin* was fired on by the whole of their 2nd Battle Squadron; while one U-boat in 1914 successfully stalked and torpedoed another (U-5), thinking it was one of our own.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE SECOND TREATY OF VERSAILLES—HERR RANTZAU'S EXCUSES—A NEW MAP OF EUROPE—THE SAAR BASIN—THE GERMAN ARMY OF THE FUTURE—SHALL THE KAISER BE TRIED?—REPARATION AND INDEMNITY—TON FOR TON—THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS—HERR SCHEIDEMANN AND THE PEACE—WHAT VISCOUNT HALDANE OF CLOAN THINKS ABOUT IT.

If the Germans were gifted with imagination, they would be deeply sensible of the irony which brings them a second time to Versailles. Where Bismarck dictated terms to prostrate France and welded the German Empire into one whole, then deemed unconquerable, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau and his colleagues have received the terms framed by the inexorable Allies. Less than fifty years have witnessed the rise and fall of Imperial Germany, and truly history cannot show a swifter Nemesis. To-day Germany stands alone. Her ancient friends—Austria, Turkey, Bulgaria—are crushed beneath the same load which overwhelms her. But she lacks imagination, and can understand neither the justice nor the reality of the blow.

The meeting of the Allies with the German delegates is a meeting which will never be blotted out from the records. For more than four years a veil has separated Germany from Western Europe. Neither we nor the French have had talk or commerce with our foes, and our first confrontation at Versailles does not suggest a speedy renewal of intimate relations. The speech made by M. Clemenceau was brief and dignified. "It is neither the time nor the place," said he, "for superfluous words." And the speech left no loophole of escape. "This second Treaty of Versailles," added the French Minister, "has cost us too much not to take on our side all the necessary precautions and guarantees that this peace shall be a lasting one." The reply of Herr Rantzau proved at once that defeat has not chastened the insolence of Germany. He spoke as one who had the right to formulate, or at least to discuss, the terms of peace. He acclaimed "the sublime thought" of the League of Nations. He strayed into the bypaths of political philosophy, declaring in the hour of his country's crisis that "the peace which cannot be defended in the name of right before the world always calls forth new resistance against it." It is late in the day for a German to defend anything "in the name of right." For fifty years the fellow-countrymen of Herr Rantzau have preached the gospel of might, naked and unashamed, and it would have better become him if he had not used words which all the

Allies know are meaningless upon his lips. We did not invite the Germans to Versailles that they should argue with us about right and wrong, an enterprise for which they are singularly unfit. We asked them to Versailles that they might hear and accept the sentence which the world has passed upon dangerous criminals.

But there is one admission which he did make. "We are under no illusion," said he, "as to the extent of our defeat and the degree of our want of power. We know that the power of the German arms is broken. We know the power of the hatred which we encounter here, and we have heard the passionate demand that the victors shall make us pay as the vanquished and shall punish those who are worthy of being punished." So far, so good. Unhappily for his own dignity, Herr Rantzau did not end there. He went on to repudiate for his country the sole guilt of the war. He repeated the old excuse, invented by the journalists of Germany, that the German people believed that it was fighting a war of defence, and he failed to see that the responsibility for this falsehood, if it were believed, rests wholly upon his own Government. Still worse was his excuse by counter-reproach for the crimes committed by the German army. "The hundreds of thousands of non-combatants," said he, "who have perished since November 11 by reason of the blockade were killed with cold deliberation, after our adversaries had conquered and victory had been assured them." This is sheer nonsense. The blockade is a lawful and recognised form of warfare, and if the Germans fear it they should have thought twice before they plunged Europe into wanton bloodshed. But it is characteristic of the Germans that they demand for themselves privileges which they refuse to others, and if only Herr Rantzau would re-read Busch's "Secret Pages" of Bismarck's life, he would understand that his country has been treated with a leniency unknown to the victors of 1871, and he would have refrained from making his loud appeal to prejudice.

From the setting of the peace we come to the peace itself, and it may be said at once that, if its terms are loyally carried out, it should prove a just and a lasting peace. It has its faults. As you read its provisions, you hear the voice of compromise speaking aloud. And compromise is always a timid adviser. You can put your finger upon clauses which were dictated not by wisdom, but in fatal compliance with Mr Wilson or another. But that part which will mar the peace, if it become not a dead letter, as we hope and believe that it will, is the League of Nations—an easy method of shifting responsibility and of depriving

the master of authority in his own house. Upon this vague and shadowy debating-society, as we shall see presently, are dumped many incompatible duties, and it will be wonderful, indeed, if its reckless constitution do not involve Europe in many years of war.

Of the new map of Europe which the Allies have drawn there is not much to be said in dispraise. It is true that there are still *lacunæ* in the scheme. Nothing, for instance, is said in the draft of Jugo-Slavia, that strange invention of the journalists, or of Albania. It is also far too amicable to our enemies. But buffer-states are created in Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, and something like a stable balance of power is established. Germany loses 30,000 square miles of territory, and little short of 7,000,000 of population; and when we consider what would have happened had victory alighted upon the shoulder of Germany, we cannot say that the peace has erred on the side of violence. The cession of Alsace-Lorraine to its rightful owners is expected and clear-cut. It presents no difficulties, and will be made to the great content of all save the Germans. The future of the Saar, on the other hand, is uncertain and nebulous. The terms on which the mines of the Saar Basin are given to France are designed to produce the greatest amount of friction with the least benefit to either side. The mines are handed over to France with perfect justice—that is true. At the same time, it is made clear that France is not to be trusted in the administration of her new territory. "In compensation for the destruction of coal-mines in Northern France"—thus runs the clause—"and as payment on account of reparation, Germany cedes to France full ownership of the coal-mines of the Saar Basin, with their subsidiaries, accessories, and facilities." As the Germans, with "cold deliberation" have destroyed the mines of Northern France, in the hope that they might start again in the commercial race with an easy lead, it is right and proper that they should atone for their wanton destruction. But what the Peace Conference gives with one hand, it takes away with the other. It shows plainly that, while it cannot refrain from an obvious act of justice, it is resolved to hedge France about with irksome restrictions. So it places the whole district under a sort of parish council. "In order to secure the rights and welfare of the population," so it is said, "and guarantee to France entire freedom in working the mines, the territory will be governed by a Commission appointed by the League of Nations and consisting of five members, one French, one a native inhabitant of the Saar, and three representing three different countries other than France and Germany. The

League will appoint a member of the Commission as Chairman, to act as executive of the Commission." We can imagine no plan more nicely calculated to ensure confusion and bad government than this one, which bears the signature, we are sure, of Mr Wilson. Fortunately it comes to an end in fifteen years, when "a plebiscite will be held by communes to ascertain the desires of the population as to continuance of the existing régime under the League of Nations, union with France, or union with Germany." Whatever may be the desires of the populace in 1934, one thing is certain: they will not confirm the mixed tutelage of a grandmotherly League.

The same weakness is displayed in dealing with Dantzig. That is to be a Free City, as free as any city can be, "under the guarantee of the League of Nations." A High Commissioner is to be appointed by the League, who shall reside at Dantzig and draw up a constitution in agreement with the representatives of the city. As Poland shall include Dantzig within her Customs frontiers, and have the use of all the city's waterways, docks, and other facilities, it would have been far simpler to hand the city over to the Poles without any let or hindrance. But the League of Nations, like the busybody that it is, will have a finger in every pie, and will guarantee to the world as much unstable and discontented government as political ingenuity may devise.

The military clauses are severe, as they should be, and if only the will of the Allies can be imposed upon Germany, we need have no fear of another murderous and unprovoked attack. "All compulsory service"—such is the decision—"is to be abolished in German territory, and recruiting regulations on a voluntary basis are to be incorporated in the German military laws, providing for the enlistment of non-commissioned officers and men for a period of not less than twelve consecutive years, and stipulating that officers shall serve for twenty-five years, and shall not be retired until the age of forty-five." The reason of these regulations is plain. Once before in history a limit was imposed upon the German Army, and the limit, fixed by Napoleon himself, was easily evaded by what was called the "Klumper" system. Recruits were passed rapidly through the army into a reserve, and their places taken by untrained men, so that in a few years the Germans, in spite of Napoleon's prohibition, were able to put in the field the army which won the Battle of Leipzig. We have taken our precautions, it is true, and fixed the number of German effectives at a hundred thousand, whose duty it will be to keep order at home and to guard the frontiers. But the difficulty is not in making the plan, but in forcing the Ger-

mans loyally to adhere to it. We know the value which they put upon "scraps of paper," and unless we keep spies all over the country, and a force ready to insist upon the carrying out of our decrees, we shall fail where Napoleon failed, and discover too late a German Army, trained and equipped, upon the frontiers of France. It is easy to attach too much importance to such provisions as those which limit the armed force of an enemy. It will be wiser if we leave the Germans no money in their banks, which they might spend upon armaments.

There is one section in the treaty which we bitterly deplore, and that is the section which deals with responsibilities for the crimes of the war. That military tribunals should be set up by the Allies to try persons accused of acts of violation of the laws and customs of war is perfectly just and right. If we did not punish such violations, then International Law would be a farce. But when the section opens with the ominous words: "The Allies publicly arraign the ex-Emperor William II. for a supreme offence against International Morality and Sanctity of Treaties," it announces publicly an infraction of the law. There is no court in existence which is competent to try the head of a State, and to invent a court which shall be framed for the mere purpose of judging one particular criminal is to outrage the first principles of justice. The Kaiser believes, rightly or wrongly, that he is answerable to God alone for his actions, as Charles I. believed; and if he follows that monarch in refusing to plead, the tribunal, "guided by the highest principles of international policy," will find itself baffled. And we say this, not from any feeling of leniency to the Kaiser, whose crimes and pretensions all honest men will condemn. We should have no objection if the Allies demanded his extradition from Holland and punished him, as they chose, without a trial. If they thought well, they might put him to death or send him, as Napoleon was sent, to St Helena. There is but one course which cannot legally be followed. We cannot call a a court into being *ad hoc*, and pretend that we are obeying the voice of justice. It is possible that that maid-of-all-work, the League of Nations, should devise some method in the future for bringing kings and presidents to trial for dereliction of duty or for offences against morality. But should we to-day set up a court where no court is or has been, we shall succeed only in making a martyr of William II., who will be far more heavily punished if he be left to his own bitter regrets and to the long torture of his own accusing thoughts.

The section in which reparation and restitution are considered is impaired by the admission that "the grand total of damages assessed against Germany may exceed

her ability to pay." Germany's ability or inability to pay does not concern the Allies, whose only business it is to present the bill and to see that it is paid within a stated time. The debt need not be wholly liquidated for a century, nor need the capital sum owing to us be handed over all at once. But by paying interest upon the whole debt and by creating a sinking fund, Germany can and should eventually free us all from a heavy burden, which we did not ourselves put upon our backs. We believe that at the present moment we owe a vast amount of money to the United States. Our creditor does not make an elaborate calculation of our assets and liabilities. He assumes, rightly enough, that we shall pay our undisputed debt, and there is an end of it. Why should not the Allies make the same assumption when they present their bill to Germany? Germany is a rich country. She has no external debt. Her country has not been ravaged as Belgium and Northern France have been ravaged. Her factories have not been despoiled of machinery and rendered useless. In one way only can she gain her self-respect, and that is by paying handsomely for all her breakages, and those who advise the Allies to deal tenderly with her do an ill service both to her and to them.

At present she is asked only to make compensation for damages caused to civilians. For the worst of all she can never compensate. She cannot bring to life again the aged, the women and children, whom she has brutally murdered by land and by sea. She cannot restore to happiness the poor wretched girls whom she deported from Lille and other places and turned to her vile uses. These things are beyond her power, as they are beyond our forgiveness. But in order that all may not go unpaid, Germany will be asked to give us £1,000,000,000 within two years as a first instalment, and a Commission will periodically examine her capacity to pay such further sums as are demanded. As to the indemnities which were loudly promised at the General Election, we hear little of them to-day, nor can we extract a pinch of truth from the Government. And, when once peace is signed, we fear that the Commission will fall into so profound an apathy that it will make no attempt to lighten the burden of debt with which Germany has weighed down all the Entente.

However, the German Government is asked to recognise the right of the Allies to replacement, ton for ton and class for class, of all merchant ships and fishing boats lost or damaged owing to the war. And for the recognition of this principle we are all grateful. A vast number of German ships are to be ceded to the Allies, and, as "an additional part of reparation," the German Government agrees to build ships for the

Allies to the amount not exceeding 200,000 tons annually during the next five years. That is as it should be, and let us hope that this "reparation" will be a wholesome warning to the pirates, who thought it an honourable act of war, and deserving the iron cross, to sink merchants at sight and to drown their crews. But we miss a reference to such gallant neutrals as Norway, which refused to bend the knee to the German bully, and with admirable courage kept the seas in spite of the menace of German submarines. After Great Britain, it is Norway which suffered most cruelly at the hands of the pirate Huns, and we shall not have done our duty in the making of peace if we do not support Norway's indisputable claim to an ample reparation. Nor is this the only complaint we have to make as to the division of the German merchant ships. There is a rumour, we hope unfounded, that the American Government intends to seize all the great liners of German origin interned in American harbours. Now, America has suffered least of all countries from the brutalities of the submarine commanders. As her losses have been the smallest, so her gains should not be the greatest. And if she persist in her rumoured policy, what are we to think about her idealism? Shall we not be justified in supposing that the ideal which she kept steadily before her was the ideal of a mercantile marine?

The blot upon the Treaty of Peace is, as we have said, the League of Nations. It is based upon a wrong principle to perform a duty for which it is obviously incompetent. Its basis is distrust of all the world. If we may believe its supporters, no civilised nation can be expected to act honesty or humanely, if left to itself. France may extract the coal from the Saar Basin. She may not be permitted to administer justice therein. Germany is stripped, rightly and justly, of her colonies, but lest the powers into whose hands they fall should break the laws of decency, they must receive "mandates" from the League before they are entrusted with the task of government. And reports must be written by the mandatories and solemnly considered by the League, which, we suppose, will approve or condemn, as it chooses. Thus another kind of dual control is invented, which cannot but lead to friction and ill-temper. What high-spirited nation will permit the interference of a committee, largely composed of States which may legally resent the interference of their fellows? One of two things is inevitable. Either the mandatory system will speedily become a dead letter, or the League of Nations will promote such bitter feuds as can be allayed only by the sword.

And the League of Nations will be especially irksome to Europe, because, as we pointed out last month, America claims the right to control us, and

denies us the right even to make a suggestion to any country on the American continent. We do not grumble at the decision of America, because, as we have already said, it reduces the League to an absurdity. We can only regret that the League, fruitful in discord as it is, should have been placed proudly and exultantly in the forefront of the Treaty. It is, in truth, a glorified vestry, a board of guardians raised to a high power, a piece of international Bumbledom, which has the strength to provoke wars, and, being deprived of arms and a general staff, not the strength to bring them to a close. The committee of all the nations will begin and end, according to the wont of committees, in talk. "Upon any war, or threat of war, the Council will meet to consider what common action shall be taken." Had the League an army at its back, its solemn meeting might be of some significance. "Members agree to carry out an arbitral award." And if a member refuses to carry out the award, which will surely happen if one member believes himself stronger than another, "the Council will propose the necessary measures." All are sure that it will, and the recalcitrant member will laugh in its face. What, then, will the Council do? Of course, it will do nothing, because it can do nothing. Behind its love of talk and its intentions, good or bad, there is no sanction. And ineptitude falls into ridicule when it is said portentously that "Members resorting to war in disregard of the Covenant will immediately be debarred from all intercourse with other Members." We do not suppose that the offending Members will care very much for that. Even in the unregenerate days, before there ever was a League of Nations, Germany on the outbreak of war was debarred from intercourse with a good many of her neighbours.

That the League of Nations will be of any benefit to the world we do not believe. At the very outset it acknowledges its impotence by permitting England and America to knit a very proper alliance with France, that the Germans may not make another unprovoked assault upon their Eastern neighbour. On the other hand, it may be very active for evil. Its peculiar duty seems to be to intervene in the affairs of others, and intervention leads commonly to war. We received due warning of the danger a hundred years ago, when the excellent work achieved by the Congress of Vienna—a Congress of experts, trained in diplomacy, who did not boast about their ignorance of geography—was spoilt by the Holy Alliance. The peace which was given to Europe by the Congress was broken by a series of little wars, for every one of which the Holy Alliance was to blame. And let it be remembered that Castlereagh, at any rate, would have nothing to do with the fantastic

schemes of Alexander, and that England was therefore able to mitigate the dangers in which the Alliance involved the peace of Europe. However, Mr Wilson could not do without his plaything, and the best that we can hope for the palace, which will shortly be opened at Geneva, is that it will be but a rival to the now disused palace at the Hague, and that its staff will perform the duties of an archivist with care and circumspection.

The treaty of peace has not been well received in Germany. The Huns, always sublimely unconscious of their own character and of the hatred which it has inspired all over Europe, have assumed a port of injured innocence. They have forgotten in a moment the brutal terms which they imposed upon Russia at Brest-Litovsk, and the still more brutal terms which they would have imposed upon the Entente had they been victorious. So long as the war lasted they were never tired of sketching the exactions of treasure and territory which they would make, as soon as victory smiled upon them. The war, undertaken avowedly for the sake of profit, for the place in the sun, of which we once heard so much, was to fill their pockets for all time, as well as give them dominion over all the world. The only matter in dispute was how far they should carry their depredations. India was to be theirs, and Egypt. The land of Australia was already portioned among the wealthy Germans who had poured their money into the Imperial war-chest. England would have been their wash-pot, France their footstool. Herr Erzberger, now a Minister in the reformed and regenerate Germany, was once obliging enough to explain his war aims. "Germany must obtain control," said he, "not only of Belgium but of the whole French coast from Dunkirk to Boulogne, with the possession of the Channel Islands; the mines of French Lorraine must pass under German control. The indemnities must provide for the full reimbursement of war costs; payment for all damage caused by the war; the redemption of all German State debts; the creation of a large fund for the German victims of the war."

Such was Herr Erzberger's modest demand, and there was not a Minister nor a General in Germany who did not propose to indulge a private fancy of his own. The earth should be theirs and the fulness thereof. All the nations of Europe should be enslaved perpetually, that the Huns might bask in the sun, when their place within its rays was assured. And now Germany lies at our feet powerless. With the complete absence of humour, which has always hampered her understanding, she whines aloud that she, the only moral guide of Europe, is savagely entreated. Forgetful of her crimes, she stands in

the attitude of an injured innocent, as though the Lusitania had never been sunk, as though Edith Cavell had not been done to death. If you read the speech of Herr Scheidemann, delivered before the National Assembly on the terms of peace, you might suppose that Germany, having drawn her sword in defence of universal liberty, had been most unrighteously attacked and beaten. No word of sorrow or penitence mars the fine fury of his outburst. No confession of wrong-doing interrupts the even flow of his hypocrisy. From an artistic point of view, he failed, we think, because he brought off his best effect too soon. "The world," he said, "has once again lost an illusion." Cannot you see the tear glistening in his honest, pitiful eye? "The nations have in this period, which is so poor in ideals, again lost a belief." The Germans preserve no ideals, save the ideal of sinking hospital ships. "What name, on the thousand bloody battlefields, in thousands of trenches, in orphaned families, among the despairing and abandoned, during the bloody years, has been mentioned with more devotion and belief than the name of Wilson?" Mr Wilson is not, we think, highly endowed with humour, but even he must have smiled when he read those impassioned words.

Herr Scheidemann has a short memory, or he could not have uttered his wild complaint. Belonging to a nation whose settled policy was the enslavement of the world, he asks instant freedom and palliation for Germany. He sketches what he calls the true portrait of Germany's future: "sixty millions behind barbed wire and prison bars, sixty millions at hard labour, for whom the enemy will make their own land a prison camp." It is not the principle to which he objects, for he acquiesced in the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and, had his country won the war, he would have shouted himself hoarse in applauding the terms which Germany would have imposed upon the world. What he objects to is that Germany should suffer in any way for her evil doing. She would have scourged us all with scorpions, and he would have said no word in protest. We are applying to her back the lightest of whips, and he mourns aloud.

Perhaps he thought that with a little of the cunning which comes natural to the German, he might deceive the Allies once more; perhaps he thought that, according to the old formula, the Junkers would win by their tears what they had lost by their arms. But he is unable to see that Germany must and shall be judged by the same laws which she would have imposed upon others. "Without ships—for our mercantile fleet passes into the Entente's hands—without cables, without colonies, without foreign settlements, without reciprocity and legal pro-

tection, aye, even without the right of co-operating in fixing prices for goods or pharmaceutical articles, which we have to deliver as hitherto. I ask you what honest man, I will not say what German, can accept such conditions? And, at the same time, we are to bestir ourselves to work, to perform forced labour for the whole world." We do not know what distinction Herr Scheidemann draws between "an honest man" and "a German." To us the distinction is clear enough. It is clear, also, that there are many things which the Germans will have to do without in the future. And Herr Scheidemann may console himself with the knowledge that his countrymen will not be deprived of a tithe of the profits and privileges from which we should have been debarred had he been able to speak with the voice of a conqueror.

We need not take the public speeches of German Ministers too seriously. It is their policy to make sensational protests, and to that policy they will adhere until the time comes for them to sign the peace. They are already sceptical themselves as to the wisdom of that policy. Herr Rantzau appears to regret the violence and bad manners of which he was guilty at Versailles. He has confided to a French journalist his belief that the Entente considers moral guarantees as insufficient, and wishes to hold the means in its hands of supervising the treaty and its carrying out without the use of great forces. But he is full of hope for the future. Having ceased to browbeat his adversaries, he expresses a lofty faith in a regenerated Germany. "We shall kill this spirit of distrust by deeds," he boasts. "We must recognise that we have not yet had an opportunity of proving our good intentions in international negotiations. We cannot at present ask our enemies to show complete confidence in us with regard to the transformations which have been effected in Germany, but we can, and must, demand that the Entente shall give us an opportunity during the period of negotiations of giving convincing proof, by actions, of the new spirit of the new Germany." Herr Scheidemann speaks with one voice, Herr Rantzau with another, and since neither of them is sincere we need not waste our time in idle comparison. It is enough to admit that Herr Rantzau spoke nothing less than the truth when he said that the Entente would never be satisfied with moral guarantees alone.

Meanwhile Lord Haldane has come gallantly to Herr Scheidemann's help. There is something almost admirable in Lord Haldane's loyalty to his "spiritual home." Truly he has paid the debt of his nurture over and over again. We do not know whether he still regards the Kaiser as the embodiment of the Zeitgeist. But nothing persuades him

to modify his opinion or to mitigate his championship. Here he is always at hand with counsel and encouragement. He is as much displeased with the peace as is Herr Scheidemann, and for the same reasons. "Only a treaty," says Herr Scheidemann, "which can be kept, only a treaty which leaves us alive, which leaves us life as our sole capital for labour and making amends—only such a treaty can again build up the world." And Lord Haldane is in complete agreement with him. "The moral is," writes our eminent statesman in the 'Glasgow Herald,' "that these terms may have to be regarded as binding to-day, but yet not as final for any prolonged period." Thus Lord Haldane is a Teuton also in his contempt for "scraps of paper." The treaty will presently be accepted and signed by the Germans, and Lord Haldane is already preaching the pernicious doctrine that signatures carry no responsibility, that a treaty which "may" have to be regarded as binding to-day—mark the modest "may"—can be torn up to-morrow. While he encourages the Germans to regard the righteous terms imposed upon her as merely transitory, he expects "fresh constructive statesmanship and largeness of outlook," which will be required "before the last word has been said about the relation of Germany to the rest of the world." The Germans will be of good heart when they hear, upon the word of a British statesman, that the treaty is but a stop-gap. We wonder what our Allies will think of Lord Haldane's disloyalty to their cause.

What, then, does Lord Haldane object to in the treaty? He finds the terms so severe that they may include the seeds of future war, and so defeat their own object. Does he? And does it not come into his mind that were the terms less severe the future war would be upon us within a year a two? What enrages the Germans most fiercely is not the severity of the terms, but the mere fact that they were beaten; and Lord Haldane should know his spiritual brothers well enough to be sure that had they been let off more easily, they would have been ready all the sooner to spring again. There remains also a sense of justice, which seems to be obscured in Lord Haldane's mind. He knows, or ought to know, what Germany would have taken from the Allies after a victory, and he objects to the separation of East Prussia from Germany; he objects also to "the loss of an enormous proportion of the resources of Germany in iron and coal," forgetting no doubt that the Germans have wantonly destroyed the coal-fields of France. He even suggests the favourite argument of the Germans, that the harsh terms may lead to revolution. "I do not believe that Germany will turn to

Bolshevism," he says with a dangerous caution. "Still the possibility is there, and is made by the burdens imposed something more than a possibility." What more could the most wildly fanatical of Germans desire to be said? Then he turns to what we can only call the argument of fear. "If seventy millions of Germans," says he, "of the racial quality of our enemies are to be left to develop their powers of peaceful penetration, neither armies nor tariffs will prevent them from succeeding hereafter, and they are not likely in that case to remain acquiescent in what they now accept." They are not likely to remain acquiescent in any case, and because they may succeed hereafter, that is no reason why we should ensure their success to-day. For Lord Haldane the moral is that, because the Germans cannot be hampered by tariffs or armies, they should not be hampered at all. The moral for us is that, if the Germans are not hampered, the terms of the treaty are far too lenient, and that Lord Haldane himself will never be happy until he has made his spiritual home his actual home, and is permitted to preach his pernicious gospel as the President of the New German Republic.

INDEX TO VOL. CCV.

ABERRATION OF A SCHOLAR, THE, 845.
ADMIRALTY FARM, AN, 371.
ARCTIC RUSSIA, "GARRISON" WORK IN, 729.
ARMOURED CARS, FURTHER ADVENTURES OF THE: Persia and Baku, 285.

Belgium, heroes of, 131 *et seq.*
BENCH AND BAR OF ENGLAND, THE: VII., Judges and Prisoners, 46—VIII., Counsel and Prisoners, 53—IX., Young Life in the Middle Temple, 192—X., The Life of a Lawyer, 315.
BEWSHER, PAUL: "GREEN BALLS," 60, 257, 400, 499, 699.
B., L. V. S.: AN OFFENSIVE IN RASKAM, 604.
Bolshevism, 715—Bolshevik atrocities, 717—the policy of the revolutionaries, 719—Britain's shame, 720—our sentimental politicians, 721—parallel of French revolutionaries and Bolsheviks, 723.

CALLWELL, Major-General Sir C. E., K.C.B.: THE WAR OFFICE IN WAR TIME, 23, 298.
CHELTENHAM, THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPS OF, 697.
CINEMA OF WAR, 233.
CLOUSTON, J. STORER: SIMON, 652, 802.
COLLAPSE, THE: I., The Raising of the Curtain, 479—II., The Germans on their Defeat, 481—III., Food "Grafting" at Home and in the Field, 486—IV., The Hoodwinking of the German People, 493—V., The Apathy of Despair, 496.
Conference of Paris, the, 418—the tragi-comedy of Prinkipo, *ib.*—Mr Wilson's indiscretion, 419—the new crusaders, 420—the "mandatory principle," 421—the examples of Egypt and Samoa, 422—aspersions cast upon the Congress of Vienna, 423—what the Congress actually achieved, 425—a real balance of power in Europe, 427—Lord Castlereagh, hero and statesman, 429—Castlereagh and Lloyd George, a contrast, 431.
"CONTACT" (Captain ALAN BOTT, M.C.): EASTERN NIGHTS—AND FLIGHTS (being an interrupted sequal to 'An Airman's Outings'): A Record of Capture in Palestine, Adventure in Turkey, and Escape through Russia, 817.
COURTS-MARTIAL IN FRANCE, 791.

DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS, 450.

EASTERN NIGHTS—AND FLIGHTS (being an interrupted sequel to 'An Airman's Outings'): A Record of Capture in Palestine, Adventure in Turkey, and Escape through Russia. I., Through the Looking-glass, 817—II., Pain, Purgatory, and a Plan, 823.
Election, the superfluous, what it revealed to us, 135.
'Elizabethans, The new,' notice of, 545 *et seq.*
ENGLAND, THE BENCH AND BAR OF, 46, 192, 315.
EXPERIENCES OF A WAR BABY: IV., Harbour, 86—V., The Beach, 94—VI., P. B. 2, 246—VII., The Crimson Comics, 250—VIII., Battle, 408.

FARM, AN ADMIRALTY, 371.
'Forty Days in 1914,' notice of, 550 *et seq.*
FRANCE, COURTS-MARTIAL IN, 791.
FREEDOM, 450 MILES TO, 1. At Kastamoni, *ib.*—moved to Changri, 3—winter at Changri, 6—aeroplane and tunnel schemes, 8 *et seq.*—move to Yozgad announced, 14 *et seq.*—trek to Yozgad *viâ* Angora, 19 *et seq.*—the "camp" at Yozgad, 141—six escape parties and their schemes, 145 *et seq.*—completing preparations, 154 *et seq.*—first night's march, 161—appalling heat and difficulties about water, 163 *et seq.*—first encounter with brigands, 169—under brigand leadership, 173—Turkish gendarmes, 324 *et seq.*—"Flower Mountain," 327—too cold to rest, 328—fording the Kizil Irmak, 333—German surveyor bluff, 337—hunt for Moses' well, 339—more brigands, 341—the use of opium, 344

—the Taurus foothills at last, 346—buying food disguised as Huns, 463 *et seq.*—cave-villages, 469—a meat meal, 470—a heart-breaking march, 472—one mile in five hours, 475—through villages by moonlight, 477—searching for water, 614—an unexpected breakfast, 616—first view of the sea, 622—arrive at the coast, 624—a miraculous find of food, 629—an awful existence, 631—a mysterious man, 632—a night reconnaissance, 750—preparations for sea voyage, 752—attempt to steal a boat, 755—off in a motor-boat, 759—engine troubles, 762—Cyprus, 764.

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF THE ARMOURED CARS: Persia and Baku, 285.

Futility, the League of, 725—Mr Wilson's idealism, 727.

"GARRISON" WORK IN ARCTIC RUSSIA, 729.

General Election, the, 274—the rout of the Bolsheviks, 275—end of Mr Asquith and his friends, 275—Mr Lloyd George's Cabinet, 276 *et seq.*

Germany, exaction of indemnities from, 137.

Government, extravagance of the, 568—wealth and lawlessness, 569—£1000 a year and one room! 570—doles for the unemployed, 571—Matthew Arnold on "Democracy," 572—our new Philistines, 573—Labour's despotic clamour, 574—a middle-class union, 576.

Great Britain, devotion to, of Dominions and Colonies during the war, 134—what the Gold Coast did, 135.

"GREEN BALLS": II., To France! 60—III., The First Raid, 257—IV., Up the Coast, 400—V., Coastwise Lights, 499—VI., Bruges, 699.

Haldane, Lord, his loyalty to his "spiritual home," 886 *et seq.*

H., H. A. le F.:—
AN ADMIRALTY FARM, 371.
A MINE-FIELD, 34.

Hills-Johnes, Sir James, V.C., G.C.B., death of, 283.

HOW BRITISH PRISONERS LEFT TURKEY, 682.

JOHNSTON, Captain M. A. B., and Captain K. D. YEARSLEY: 450 MILES TO FREEDOM, 1, 141, 324, 462, 614, 748.

KEELING, Lieut.-Col. E. H., M.C.: HOW BRITISH PRISONERS LEFT TURKEY, 682.

KLAXON:—
ON PATROL, 407.
THE STORY OF OUR SUBMARINES, 174, 349, 552, 671, 855.

LAND DAYS, OUR, 70. I., Boots, *ib.*—II., The Call of the Land, 71—III., The Beginning of it, 73—IV., Apprentices, 74—V., In which I plough, 76—VI., Fresh Fields, 77—VII., Winter's jobs, 79—VIII., Spring Sowing, 81—IX., "Fettling" turnip land, 82—X., Chiefly concerning Sam, 83—XI., Early Summer and Haytime, 223—XII., The Crux of the Year, 225—XIII., All in a Day's Work, 229—XIV., "Looking back," 363—XV., Labourers all, 366—XVI., Conclusion, 368.

Lefranc's 'Sous le Masque de "William Shakespeare," William Stanley, vie Comte de Derby,' notice of, 845 *et seq.*

MEREDITH, GEORGE, AND OTHERS, 542.

'Meredith, George: His Life and Friends in relation to his Work,' notice of, 542 *et seq.*

MINE-FIELD, A, 34.

MOUNTAINS, DOWN FROM THE, 450.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD: *January*, 128—*February*, 274—*March*, 418—*April*, 568—*May*, 715—*June*, 876.

Nations, the League of, 883.

NOYES, ALFRED: THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPS OF CHELTENHAM, 697.

OBSTRUCTION'S GENTLE ART, 433. (An A.S.C. chronicle of the start of the Salonica campaign.)

ON PATROL.—IX., A.D. 400, 407.

OPPORTUNITY, 769.

OUTPOSTS, FROM THE—
An Offensive in Raskam, 604.

PAGE, ARTHUR: COURTS-MARTIAL IN FRANCE, 791.

Peace, Herr Scheidemann and the, 885.

Politics, class-hatred in, 280—the Labour Party's place in the sun, 281—the Trades Disputes Act, 282.

QUEX: THE RETURN PUSH, 103, 200, 381, 515, 635.

RASKAM, AN OFFENSIVE IN, 604.

RETURN PUSH, THE: V., 103—VI., 107—VII., 113—VIII., 122—IX., 200—X., 208—XI., 213—XII., 219—XIII., 381—XIV., 390—XV., 515—XVI., 524—XVII., 529—XVIII., 635—XIX., 648.

ROBUR: "GARRISON" WORK IN ARCTIC RUSSIA, 729.

SCHOLAR, THE ABERRATION OF A, 845.
SIMON: I., The Solitary Passenger, 652—II., The Procurator-Fiscal, 655—III., The Heir, 659—IV., The Man from the West, 662—V., The Third Visitor, 667—VI., At Night, 802—VII., The Drive Home, 805—VIII., Sir Reginald, 811—IX., A Philosopher, 814.
STRAHAN, J. A.: THE BENCH AND BAR OF ENGLAND, 46, 192, 315.
SUBMARINES, THE STORY OF OUR: Personnel, instruction, and types of boats, 174 *et seq.*—trial of a new boat, 179 *et seq.*—typical report of an E-boat's trip into the Bight, 185 *et seq.*—the German submarine and its variations in type, 349—submarine-hunting, 350 *et seq.*—submarine *v.* submarine, 355 *et seq.*—"contacts," 359 *et seq.*—submarine strategy, 552 *et seq.*—comparison of British and German mentality, 671 *et seq.*—description of an attack, 674 *et seq.*—a patrol trip, 677 *et seq.*—submarine *v.* submarine engagement, 679 *et seq.*—exploits of "E 11," 858—the Marmora submarines, 862—in the Baltic, 866 *et seq.*—routine in a patrol boat, 870 *et seq.*—losses during the war, 874.
'Swinburne, The Letters of Algernon Charles,' notice of, 138 *et seq.*

TANKS, A COMPANY OF: I., On the XIth Corps Front (October to December 1916), 577—II., Fred Karno's Army (January to April 1917), 584—III., Before the Battle (March and April 1917), 591—IV., The First Battle of Bullecourt (April 11, 1917), 832.
TURKEY, HOW BRITISH PRISONERS LEFT, 682.
Versailles, the second Treaty of, 876—Herr Rantzau's excuses, *ib.*—a new map of Europe, 878—the Saar Basin, *ib.*—the German Army of the future, 869—shall the Kaiser be tried? 880—reparation and indemnity, 881 *et seq.*

WALSHE, DOUGLAS:—
OBSTRUCTION'S GENTLE ART, 433.
OPPORTUNITY, 769.
WAR BABY, EXPERIENCES OF A, 86, 246, 408.
WAR, CINEMA OF, 233.
War, France and England in the, 128—Belgium's noble part in the, 129.
WAR OFFICE IN WAR TIME, THE, 23. II., Cabinet's unsuitability for controlling military policy, *ib. et seq.*—need of the inculcation of secretiveness among soldier-officers, 26—breaks in monotonous existence at the War Office, 27—civilian *versus* military branches, 29—the General Staff, 31—international law, 32. III., The censorship, Press and Cable, 298 *et seq.*—the Topographical Section of the General Staff, 300 *et seq.*—official secretiveness, 304 *et seq.*—the War Office and the world of journalism, 307 *et seq.*—troubles of the General Staff with the amateur strategist, 309 *et seq.*
WATSON, Major W. H. L., D.C.M.: A COMPANY OF TANKS, 577, 832.
WHIBLEY, CHARLES:—
GEORGE MEREDITH AND OTHERS, 542.
THE ABERRATION OF A SCHOLAR, 845.
WILKINSON, E. S.: OUR LAND DAYS, 70, 223, 363.
WILLIAMS, VALENTINE: THE COLLAPSE, 479.

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